BLACK
LAGOON
07
STORY & ART BY
REI HIROE
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT
CONTENT

REI HIROE

It's volume 7. Good job, me.

I RECOGNIZE...
...YOUR FACE.
ONCE I...
...SEE SOMEONE'S FACE...
...I NEVER FORGET IT. IT IS A PROFESSIONAL HABIT...
...YEAH.
THAT'S RIGHT. BUT...
THE DIVIDE IS FARTHER DOWN.
AND YOU CAN ONLY SEE IT AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT.
...
...THAT BASTARD...
GOD DAMN IT...
I HAPPEN TO HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THE YOUNG MASTER AS WELL...
I HOPE YOU'LL PARDON THE INTRUSION...

Rei Hiroe was born on December 5, 1972. After working at a game company, he debuted as a mangaka in 1993. He has been an active illustrator and dojinshi, and has created many titles released through the dojin community. He is best known for his works, ***Hisuikyoukitan*** and ***SHOOK UP!*** (both currently available in new formats published by Shogakukan) and his first artwork collection, ***Barrage***.

BLACK LAGOON 007

VIZ Signature Edition

Story and Art by
REI HIROE

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BLACK LAGOON is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. This volume contains graphic violence, strong language, nudity, adult situations, drinkin', smokin', ass-kickin', law breakin', gun-love, running with scissors and just about everything your mother ever told you not to do.
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007
STORY & ART BY
REI HIROE
BLACKL

Dutch
SKIPPER OF THE OF THE *BLACK LAGOON* AND LEADER OF THE CREW. DUTCH STAYS COOL NO MATTER HOW BAD THINGS GET. HIS BACKGROUND INCLUDES MILITARY SERVICE, INCLUDING A TOUR IN VIETNAM.
Benny
THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE HIGH-TECH ELECTRONICS ONBOARD THE *BLACK LAGOON*. BENNY ESCAPED FROM THE U.S. AND IS ON THE RUN FROM BOTH THE FBI AND THE MAFIA.
Crew of the Black Lagoon
Rock
A FORMER JAPANESE *SALARYMAN*, WHOSE REAL NAME IS ROKURŌ OKAJIMA. ABANDONED BY HIS COMPANY AFTER THE CREW OF THE *BLACK LAGOON* ABDUCTED HIM, ROCK LATER JOINED HIS CAPTORS.
Revy
THE *BLACK LAGOON'S* TOP GUNSLINGER, NICKNAMED 'TWO HAND.' HER FOUL MOUTH AND EXTREMELY SHORT FUSE USUALLY GET HER IN LOTS OF TROUBLE.

STORY

Rock, formerly known as Rokuro Okajima, was a faceless employee at a large Japanese company. Abducted by the crew of the *Black Lagoon* and callously abandoned by his company, he takes on the name "Rock" and joins the smugglers as an apprentice sailor.

Roanapur is a rough and tumble city where crime syndicates from around the world compete for their share of the black market. Just as Rock awakens to his new life as an outlaw, rumors spread throughout the city that 'the maid' Roberta has returned. What is Roberta doing in Roanapur and what does she want?

PERSONALLY, I LIKE BEING ON THE FIRING LINE, BUT...
...I'VE GOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH THE POSITION I HOLD. ANNOYING, ISN'T IT?

Chang

Boss of the Roanapur branch of the Hong Kong Triad criminal gang.

Balalaika

Boss of the Thai branch of "Hotel Moscow," a noted Russian criminal gang. Balalaika once was a captain in the Red Army of the former Soviet Union.

Fabiola

Lovelace Family maid. Roberta's subordinate.

Garcia

Next head of the Lovelace Family, one of the 13 Families of South America. His father is Diego Lovelace.

Roberta

The Lovelace Family "Head Matron." An ex-terrorist once feared as "The Bloodhound of Florencia."

BLACK LAGOON

STORY & ART BY

REI HIROE

007

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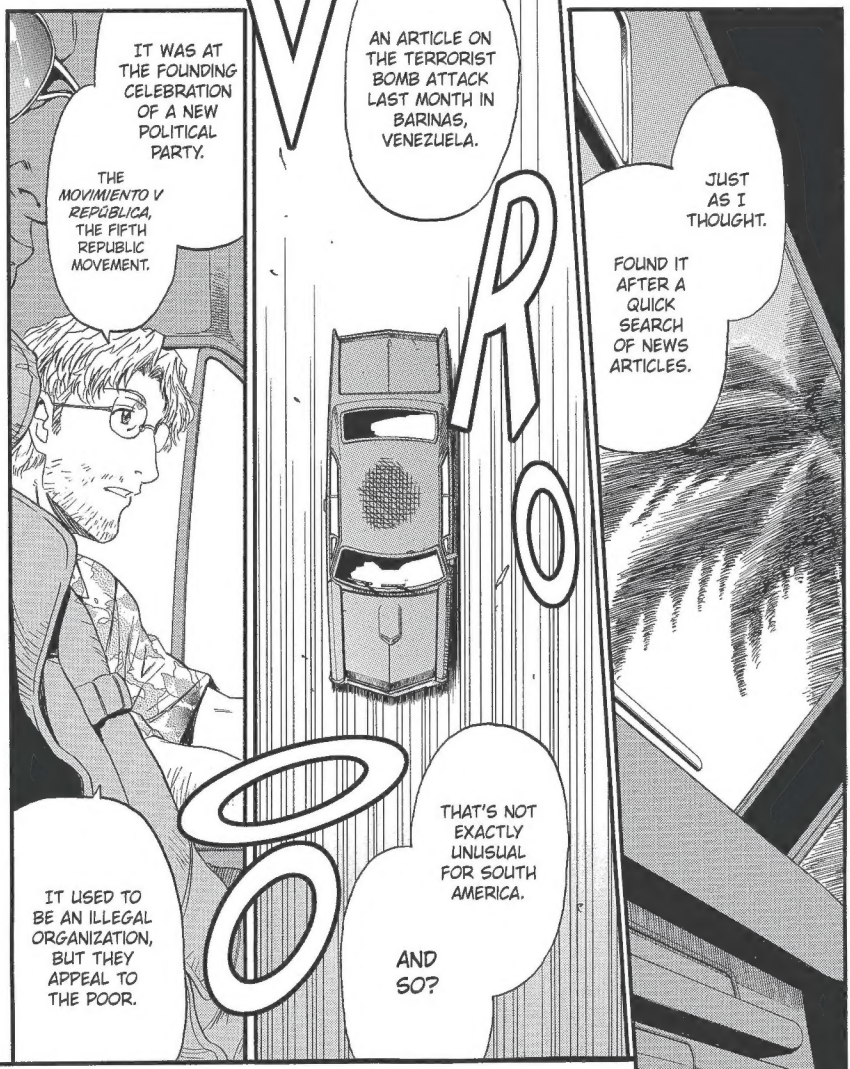

VROOOO
AN ARTICLE ON THE TERRORIST BOMB ATTACK LAST MONTH IN BARINAS, VENEZUELA.
IT WAS AT THE FOUNDING CELEBRATION OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY.
THE *MOVIMIENTO V REPÚBLICA*, THE FIFTH REPUBLIC MOVEMENT.
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
FOUND IT AFTER A QUICK SEARCH OF NEWS ARTICLES.
THAT'S NOT EXACTLY UNUSUAL FOR SOUTH AMERICA.
AND SO?
IT USED TO BE AN ILLEGAL ORGANIZATION, BUT THEY APPEAL TO THE POOR.

Chapter 47: El Baile de la Muerte - Part IV

INDEED, DUTCH. BUT...
THE PROBLEM WAS THE HEAD OF THE LOVELACE FAMILY WAS ON THE STAGE WHEN THE BOMB WENT OFF.
SO THE FLIP SIDE IS THIS PARTY CAN'T BE MUCH FUN...
...FOR ANYONE HIRING THE POOR FOR ABOUT A NICKEL A DAY.
YEAH, BUT...
...THERE AREN'T MANY RICH FOLKS UP FOR GETTING SPRAYED WITH BULLETS IN THE JUNGLES OF BOLIVIA. AND-
CHE GUEVARA CAME FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY TOO, BENNY.
...WHAT?
THAT'S RIGHT, DUTCH. THAT'S EXACTLY WHY...
...HE STOOD OUT AMONG THE THIRTEEN FAMILIES THAT CONTROL THE SOUTH AMERICAN ECONOMY. PRETTY IRONIC.
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY?
THERE ARE EVEN FEWER WILLING TO HAVE THEIR ASSES BLOWN OFF FOR SUPPORTING A LEFT-WING PARTY.
HE AND THE PARTY LEADER WERE FRIENDS.
HE WAS ALSO A LIBERAL, WHICH IS RARE FOR THEIR KIND.

...LET'S GET BACK TO THE SUBJECT.
SOME SAY FARC WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMBING, OTHERS SAY IT WAS THE PARAMILITARIES, BUT THE TRUTH IS STILL IN THE DARK.
THE CALDERA ADMINISTRATION EXPRESSED ITS REGRETS AND ENLARGED THEIR MILITARY POLICE FORCE TO PREVENT ANOTHER INCIDENT.
THEY ALSO MADE VEILED THREATS AGAINST THOSE INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT AND THIS CASE WAS CLOSED.
AS FOR THAT CRAZY MAID'S MOTIVE, IT'S PRETTY CLEAR.
SHE WANTS REVENGE FOR HER MASTER'S DEATH.
BUT...
...WHY HERE AND NOT BOGATA OR CARACAS?
...I STILL CAN'T FIGURE THAT OUT.
THAT'S WHERE THE LEADS-
FLW
50 K.U.
RRR

FLK
BENNY.
YEAH, I SAW THAT.
HERE'S A LITTLE PREDICTION ...
WE'RE GONNA NEED TO TAKE A RAIN CHECK ON THOSE DRINKS ONCE WE GET TO THE BAR.

YEAH.
AND IF OUR LUCK RUNS OUT...
...WE GET WELL VENTILATED TOO...YEAH?
STEP ON IT, BENNY.
K
K
RNG
RNG
RNG♫

ARE YOU...
DON'T YOU ANSWER THAT.
I DON'T WANT ANY MORE TROUBLE.
SLA
CHNG
M
IT'S MY PHONE!!
LET GO!!
KABLAM
BLAM
BLAM
GI
GI
GI
GI
...FUCKING CRAZY?!
WE DON'T GOT TIME FOR NO COMEDY ROUTINE! GIVE IT TO ME!!
BWAHAHAHAHA
STRUGGLE
SQUIRM
IT'S LIKE SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE!
ROCK! LOOK! LOOK!

KBOO
BAN
BAN
KBLAM
JUST GIMME THE DAMN PHONE!
FUCK YOU! YOU AIN'T CALLING NO MORE OF YOUR STUPID FRIENDS HERE!
IS THAT HOW YOU WANNA PLAY, BAO-
JUST SHUT UP!!
SK
RK
KLNK
KLMP
KLNK
KRK
WE'RE IN FRONT OF YELLOW FLAG!
GUSTAVO!
SK
RCH
WHADDA YA WANT US TO DO?!
JOSÉ! HEAVY WEAPON!
YOU ON THE TECHNICAL WITH THE .50 CAL?!
HEAVE

YEAH! THE FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE–
FIRE THAT THING INTO THE BAR!
GOOD JOB, CHICO!
YOU CRAZY FUCKING SPIC!
DON'T SHOOT! DON'T SHOOT!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! SHOOT! SHOOT!
BAO, SHUT UP!
DON'T SHOOT!
WE GOT CUT OFF!!
HELLO?! HELLO!? SHIT!
GUSTAVO ?!

CHICO! WHAT DO WE-
DAMN IT! THEY KILLED HIM!
MALERO!
FUCK IT! FILL THE WHOLE PLACE FULL OF LEAD!
KL
CHAK
KILL 'EM ALL!

PAK
PAK
PAK

DAT
AW GREAT, GUSTAVO!
NOW I'M GONNA HAVE TO REBUILD AGAIN!
KKR ASH
DA
KSH
DAT
KSH
HEH HEH HEH...
PLACE IS A SHITHOLE ANYWAY. I'M DOIN' YOU A FAVOR, BAO.

BLAM
BLAM
FORGET THAT!
THAT LITTLE BITCH GET BLOWN TO BITS YET!?
KSHING
SPAK
WHO KNOWS?
AS FAR AS I CAN TELL...

DAK DAK
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE...
...SHE'S SLICED UP YET.
DAK
DAK DAK
AAAARRGH!
IT HURTS!
IT HURTS!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME LORD!!
KNK!
CHK!
BORGE!
TAKE SOME GUYS AND GET IN THERE!
TMP
CHOF

LISTEN UP, YOU SCUMBAGS!
YOUR BOSS IS A PIG! HE DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT YOU!
THERE'S NO REASON TO BE LOYAL TO HIM!
TAKE THE INJURED ...
...AND GO OUT THE BACK WHILE YOU CAN!!
NOW GET OUTTA HERE!
IF YOU STILL WANNA STICK AROUND...
...YOU CAN DIE HERE WITH ME!
WHOA ...
SHE'S LIKE THE SHERIFF.
HOW REFRESHING.
BUT SHE WON'T LIVE LONG LIKE THAT.

THE HEAD MATRON WAS RIGHT! THIS PLACE...
...IS HORRIBLE!
CHK
ZWP
WHAT... ...THE HELL IS THAT?
NOBODY HERE THINKS TWICE ABOUT WAVING THEIR GUNS AROUND.
THIS PLACE...
...REALLY IS THE WORST!
SH

KC-
AH
OK

WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?!
FIRE! FIRE!
DAK
DAK
DAK

DAT DAT DAT
THONK
THONK
BOOM

SHK
LA:K
HH
OH!
CRAZY BITCH!
RETREAT! WE GOTTA REGROUP!
THNK
THNK
THNK
HEY! CUT THAT OUT!
YOU'RE TURNING MY PLACE INTO AN OUTDOOR CAFE!!
THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA.
THEM COSA NOSTRA GUYS'LL GO FOR THAT.

RRRRRT
WAAAGH!
WAIT! HOLD UP!
SAY IT SO THEY CAN HEAR YOU, GUSTAVO!
THE BITCH IS STILL ALIVE! COME BACK, YOU COWARDS!
THAT STUPID IDIOT!
TP
KA
CHAK
GUSTAVO'S DEAD! IT WAS-
BOSS?! IS THAT YOU, BOSS?!

THO
KSHAK
OM
...
MY GOD...
FWSH
KRAK
RK
KRAK
TH
MP
THIS PLACE IS ABSOLUTELY WRETCHED!!

FSSSS
Chapter 48:
El Baile de la Muerte -
Part V
THIS PLACE IS ABSOLUTELY WRETCHED!!
MY GOD...
...

SEÑOR ROCK!
ARE YOU STILL WITH US?!
OVER HERE!
SOMEHOW I'M STILL ALIVE!
AH! GOOD!
WITH YOU TWO DEAD IT WOULD BE A LOT HARDER TO FIND ROBERTA.
THE LITTLE BITCH DOESN'T MINCE WORDS, DOES SHE?
...BAO.
BAO!
WHERE'S THE BACKDOOR?
LUCKY FOR YOU, THERE'RE OPENINGS EVERYWHERE.
GO OUT ANY-WHERE YOU WANT.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
C'MON, YOU KNOW WHAT I—
YOU KNOW WHAT I REALLY WANNA SEE RIGHT NOW, YOU MEXICAN TURD?!
YOUR FACE BLASTED INTO PIECES LIKE A JIGSAW PUZZLE BY THAT BITCH'S CRAZY GUN, UNDERSTAND ME?! GET THE FUCK OUT!
SEÑOR ROCK!
WE SHOULD BE...
...SHIT!
FUCK THIS! FUCK THIS!
KCHK

VW
IT'S...
...NOT OVER YET!
SH
YOU LITTLE BITCH!!
HP

IT IS OVER, GUSTAVO.
THAT LITTLE GIRL FUCKED YOU IN THE ASS...
AND YOU WANNA EMBARRASS YOURSELF EVEN MORE ON TOP OF THAT?
...THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU.
FUCK YOU. I'M TELLING YOU OUTTA THE KINDNESS OF MY HEART.
ROANAPUR STARTS TREATING YOU LIKE A BITCH AND YOU'RE OUTTA BUSINESS.
YOU BACK OFF NOW AND YOU STILL GOT A CHANCE TO GET BACK ON YOUR FEET.
AND YOU WON'T BE KNOWN AS THE GUY WHO SHOT A KID IN THE BACK. OKAY?
...SHIT!
YOU GOT LUCKY, KID!
BUT REMEMBER THIS.
IT WON'T BE LIKE THIS THE NEXT TIME!
YOUR MEN ARE SLIMY AND STUPID, AND THEY STINK LIKE A STABLE.
THEY ARE EXTREMELY UNPLEASANT, SO PLEASE DON'T EVER SHOW YOUR FACE TO ME AGAIN.
YOU LITTLE BITCH-

HMPH! BITCH!
I'LL LET IT SLIDE THIS TIME, BUT...
...NOW THAT I KNOW YOUR FACE, NEXT TIME, YOU'RE GOING DOWN.
YOU GOT THAT?
SO...
...WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE?
KL
CHAK
GO FOR IT.
BE A MAN AND DUEL IT OUT.
SIGH...
BARTENDER. BEER.
DASH
I THINK HE USED EVERY CLICHE IN THE BOOK.
WHOA...
HE'S FAST.
HMM?
KLNK

HEY DUTCH!
THE MAID MUST'VE BURNED HIS ASS.
WASN'T THAT THE CARTEL'S LIEUTENANT THAT JUST RAN PAST US DOING THE 100-METER DASH?
...I DON'T THINK...
...THAT'S ENTIRELY A JOKE.
JESUS... THIS IS THE WORST I'VE EVER SEEN THIS PLACE TORN UP.
IT'S LIKE HUE CASTLE. THE NVA LAUNCH AN ASSAULT HERE OR SOMETHING?
DUTCH!
THE GUNFIRE'S DIED DOWN. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT ROCK, BUT I DOUBT BAO AND REVY ARE CORPSES.
LET'S OPEN THE LID FIRST, THEN WE'LL TALK.

WE'VE RECEIVED WORD THREE OF THEIR TECHNICALS ARE HEADED...
...FOR SITARAD'S CENTRAL HIGHWAY.
GREAT BROTHER CHANG.
THE COLOMBIANS ARE MOBILIZ-ING.
SIR...
WE TOOK A SWING AND MISSED. WE ONLY INSTRUCTED BAO TO INFORM US WHEN HE SAW THE MAID.
...
IF THE CARTEL HAS A BEEF WITH THE MAID...
WE MISSED EACH OTHER.
THE ONLY THINGS DOWN THERE ARE A HUGE LOADING AREA, WARE-HOUSES AND THE YELLOW FLAG.
BIU.
WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE YELLOW FLAG?

...WELL THEN.
...WHAT DO WE DO?
THERE'S NOTHING TO GAIN BY GOING TO THE YELLOW FLAG NOW.
EVEN MORE SO IF THE MAID IS WHO FRY-FACE SAID SHE WAS.
SHE'S UNPREDICT-ABLE. RISKING HER NECK OVER LAGOON.
THINGS FLARED UP THE LAST TIME SHE WAS HERE, WHEN SHE CAME TO RESCUE THE BOY THE COLOMBIANS KIDNAPPED.
THERE WAS NO LOGIC OR GAIN IN IT, SO SHE TOOK A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. BUT...
...NOT THIS TIME.
...GREAT BROTHER.
...THIS MAID, IS SHE REALLY WHAT SHE'S RUMORED TO BE?
FRY-FACE WOULDN'T TELL ME MUCH.
BUT IF YOU BELIEVE WHAT SHE SAYS, SHE'S DANGEROUS.

BIU.
SHE'S OUT FOR REVENGE BECAUSE OF THAT TERRORIST BOMB ATTACK THAT BLEW HER MASTER TO BITS, RIGHT?
...YES, GREAT BROTHER.
OKAY THEN. A LITTLE INVESTIGATION AND GETTING THAT MUCH IS EASY.
BUT...
THE IDENTITY...
...OF HER ENEMY STILL ISN'T CLEAR.
THE MAID SHIFTED HER FOCUS HERE FOR HER FOX HUNT.
THAT MEANS...
...HER TARGET IS HERE. THE BLOODHOUND CAME TO TOWN FOLLOWING THE SCENT OF HER PREY.
...YOU SEE, BIU.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT SOME CRAZY EX-GUERILLA MAID.
SHE CAN GET HER REVENGE OR KILL AS MANY PEOPLE AS SHE WANTS. WHATEVER.
AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T HARM US.
BUT WHAT'S REALLY BOTHERING ME LIKE A LEAKY TOILET IS...
...SOMEONE IS HIDING OUT HERE THAT EVEN I CAN'T IDENTIFY.

AND THAT RUBS ME THE WRONG WAY.
SOMEONE WHO COULD TAKE OUT ONLY THOSE WHO WERE ON THE PLATFORM, AMONG THE HUNDREDS ON THE SCENE AT THE BOMBING.
SOMEBODY WITH THAT KIND OF SKILL, WHOSE PURPOSE WE DON'T KNOW, IS HIDING OUT IN THIS TOWN.
WHAT IF THEY DON'T NEED TO HIRE GUNS?
BIJI.
WHAT IF THESE GUYS DON'T WANT TO BECOME HOUSEHOLD NAMES?
WHAT COULD A BUNCH LIKE THAT, WITH ONLY POWER AND SKILL, NO GREED AND NO NEED FOR MONEY, WANT IN THIS TOWN?
...BUT GREAT BROTHER, WE KNOW THE BACKGROUNDS OF JUST ABOUT EVERY-BODY IN THE CITY.
INCLUDING ANYONE WHO ARRIVED HERE RECENTLY. WE'D HEAR ABOUT SOMEONE WITH THAT KIND OF SKILL WHETHER WE WANT TO OR NOT.
WE SHOULD DO A BACKGROUND CHECK ON EVERYONE, INCLUDING ANYONE NOT INVOLVED IN ROANAPUR'S PROFIT-MAKING ENTERPRISES.
STILL, THAT'S ALL SPECULATION.
...
...TO VISIT THEM WITHOUT DISRESPECTING THEM, WE'LL NEED AN APPROPRIATE EXCUSE.
THE COLOMBIANS ARE CLOSEST TO THE TRUTH FOR THE TIME BEING. BUT...
IN ANY CASE...

...
AT THE END OF THE DAY...
IT'S BEST WE GO ASK THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED, I GUESS.
...THEN AGAIN...
ROANAPUR IS STILL UNSTABLE.
IT'S NOT WISE TO STIR THINGS UP UNNECESSARILY.
BIU.
LET'S GO FOR A WALK.
IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA...
...TO GET INTRODUCTIONS OUT OF THE WAY OVER A DRINK.
VROOO

THE SHORT VERSION OF THE KILLER MAID SHOWED UP.
I'M SHOCKED.
NOT ONLY WAS THE PLACE TURNED INTO AN OUTDOOR CAFE...
WHAT ARE YOU?
HER DAUGHTER?
NEITHER THE HEAD MATRON NOR I...
...ARE OF THAT AGE.
YO, YO, LOLITA.
YOU GOT A GRENADE STICKIN' OUT.
PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ME!
OH BROTHER.
TWO SURPRISES IN A ROW. WHAT'S NEXT?
IT WAS THE HEAD MATRON'S CHOICE.
AND PLEASE TAKE BACK "FUCKING FOUR EYES."
YOU'RE PRETTY FUSSY FOR A KID.
BUT ANYWAY...
BUT MAN...
BOTH YOU AND THAT FUCKING FOUR EYES...
...GOT A THING FOR STRANGE HARDWARE, DON'T YA?

REALLY?
SO IT'S A SECRET?
MAYBE...
...ROBERTA'S BEEN HIDING HER BACKGROUND FROM YOU AS WELL?
V
R
R
TAVIA, MASICA AND KARIN...
BUT ONLY THE HEAD MATRON AND I KNOW HOW TO HANDLE A WEAPON.
...DO NOT KNOW THE HEAD MATRON AND I EVEN CARRY A GUN.
WHAT'S WITH THE LOVELACE MANOR?
IS EVERYONE THERE GEARED UP TO GO RESCUE HOSTAGES AT THE IRANIAN EMBASSY?
THE LOVELACE MANOR...
...CURRENTLY EMPLOYS FIVE MAIDS INCLUDING ME.
...I DO NOT WISH TO SPEAK REGARDING THAT MATTER.
BUT...
...
THAT IS VERY PERCEPTIVE OF YOU.
BENNY, TAKE THIS TURN. THE SUNG KANG PALACE SHOULD BE PAST THE INTERSECTION.
I CAN'T TELL WHO'S THE KID.
DON'T PUSH HER, REVY.
C'MON, MAN? SPILL IT-

I'M JEALOUS. THIS IS THE CLASSIEST HOTEL IN TOWN.
WH
AM
I HAVE DREAMS ABOUT LIVIN' IN THE SUITES HERE, EH, BENNY?
I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER WHERE WE STAND, DUTCH.
CHK
ROCK, GRAB HER STUFF FROM THE TRUNK.
YOU GOT IT.
UM...
E-EXCUSE ME...?
...
MY LEGS SEEM TO BE STIFF. WILL YOU GIVE ME A HAND?
HUH?
WHAT?
WHAT AM I, YOUR NANNY?!
FINE. HERE...!
II

GRIP
...
...YOU...
YES?
...AH.
FORGET IT. IT'S NOTHING.
FABIOLA! WILL YOU LEAD THE WAY?
REVY! C'MON!
DING
IF I MAY REMIND YOU ONCE AGAIN...
IN THIS ROOM, MASTER GARCIA, THE 12TH HEAD OF THE LOVELACE FAMILY, ONE OF THE 13 FAMILIES OF SOUTH AMERICA...
TMP
...AWAITS YOU. PLEASE, COME-
HA

...WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE LAGOON TRADERS.
YOU'RE LATE.
I HAPPEN TO HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THE YOUNG MASTER AS WELL...
I HOPE YOU'LL PARDON THE INTRUSION...

WELL...
IF IT ISN'T THE LAGOON TRADERS. YOU'RE LATE.
I HAPPEN TO HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THE YOUNG MASTER AS WELL...
I HOPE YOU'LL PARDON THE INTRUSION...

Chapter 49: El Baile de la Muerte - Part VI

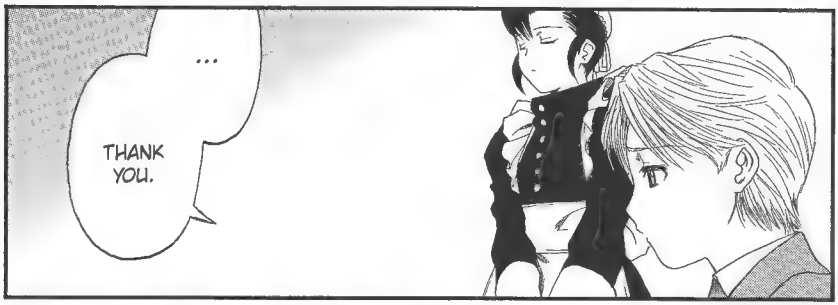
...
GET AWAY FROM THE YOUNG MASTER...
YOU THUG!!

WHAMP
CALM DOWN...
LITTLE MISS MAID. I'M...
...NOT HERE FOR A SHOOT-OUT.
I DIDN'T COME HERE WITH THREATS OR RIDICULE.
I'M HERE...
...TO TALK TO THE YOUNG MASTER.
NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.
BA
...!
DO NOT LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, YOUNG MASTER!
THIS TOWN IS AS FILTHY AS THE HEAD MATRON SAID!
WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE, FABIOLA.
FOR NOW.

IN JUST THREE DAYS SINCE I ARRIVED HERE, I'VE ALREADY BEEN INVOLVED IN A GUNFIGHT.
THE PEOPLE OF THIS TOWN ARE ALL SCUM!
HAH.
WAY TO TALK ABOUT US.
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, MISS MAID.
YES INDEED.
THIS TOWN IS A CESSPIT FILLED WITH SCUM.
YOU SHOULD BE SUSPICIOUS OF EVERYTHING HERE.
CERTAIN TRUTHS DO BECOME VISIBLE WHEN YOU SUSPECT EVERYTHING. BUT...
...REMAINING OBSERVANT UNTIL ALL THE CARDS ARE DEALT...
...IS ANOTHER WAY TO FIND THE TRUTH.
...
FABIOLA.
KL
K
...
YES, YOUNG MASTER.

KA-CHIK
MY APOLOGIES.
PLEASE, COME IN.
SORRY TO INTER-RUPT, BUT WE'RE GETTING LONELY OUT HERE.
MIND IF WE SIT?
HAH!
GIMME A BREAK, MAN.
THIS ISN'T YOUR ROOM.
ASK FOR HIS PERMISSION IF YOU WANNA SMOKE.
REVY!
...
REVY.
ASK FOR HIS PERMISSION ...
THERE ARE NO ASHTRAYS IN HERE.
PLEASE REFRAIN.
Feh
... HMPH!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
UH, YOUNG MASTER?
YOU MIND IF I LIGHT ONE UP?

...I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR FATHER.
YOU HAVE MY CONDOLENCES.
...WELL THEN.
I'M ALREADY AWARE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AND HOW THAT TURNED OUT.


...
THANK YOU.

...
YOU ARE EXACTLY RIGHT, MR. CHANG.
WE CAME HERE TO RESOLVE THAT AS WELL.
...BUT WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.
DON'T THANK ME YET, YOUNG MASTER.
THIS ISN'T OVER.
NEITHER FOR YOU NOR FOR US.

GARCIA ...
WILL YOU TELL US WHAT HAPPENED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING?
THERE MAY BE THINGS WE CAN SEE THAT YOU COULDN'T.
...I KNOW IT'S HARD, BUT...
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN, MR. ROCK.
...WHERE SHOULD I BEGIN...
SOON AFTER THE INCIDENT ...
...THE POLICE AND MILITARY BEGAN INVESTIGATING IT AS A TERRORIST ATTACK... THE PARA-MILITARY GROUP BRAVO PUEBLO ALLIANCE EMERGED AS A SUSPECT.
...THEY WERE DETAINED SOON AFTER THE ATTACK.
ONE OF THEM WAS RELEASED DUE TO A LACK OF EVIDENCE... THE OTHER TWO CONTINUED TO DENY THE CHARGES.
A TERRORIST BOMB ATTACK BY A BUNCH OF RIGHT-WINGERS UNHAPPY WITH A LEFT-WING PARTY IN POWER.
MAKES TOO MUCH SENSE.
AND THAT'S WHY IT'S SUSPICIOUS.
CONTINUE.

YES.
WE TOO... NO, ROBERTA ALSO HAD THE SAME DOUBTS.
THAT IT MADE *TOO MUCH* SENSE.
SHE ALSO SAID...
...THEY DID NOT HAVE THE SKILLS TO CARRY OUT SUCH A BOMBING.
ON TOP OF THAT, THEY HAD NO REASON TO HAVE SUCH SKILLS.
BUT...
THE POLICE ARE ACTING AS IF THE CASE IS SOLVED. WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THEM SINCE THE ARRESTS.
...WE ALMOST GAVE UP AND TRIED TO ACCEPT THEIR OFFICIAL POSITION.
THAT IS UNTIL...
...A CERTAIN PERSON PAID US A VISIT.
THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS AN OFFICER OF A PARATROOP UNIT ALIGNED WITH THE MVR.
THE MVR ALSO HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND BEGAN THEIR OWN INVESTIGATION.

THE MVR WAS ORIGINALLY A MOVEMENT STARTED BY A GENERAL OF THE VENEZUELAN PARATROOPERS.
...YOU ARE EXACTLY RIGHT.
HE OBVIOUSLY HAS STRONG TIES TO THE VENEZUELAN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.
THEY RE-EXAMINED THE BACK-GROUNDS OF ALL THE STAFF INVOLVED IN THE CEREMONY.
HE HAS A LOT OF FANATICAL SYMPATHIZERS WITHIN THE UNIT.
IT'S PROBABLY BEST TO LOOK INTO IT FROM THAT ANGLE.
HE CAME TO INFORM US WHAT HE HAD DISCOVERED UP TO THAT POINT IN HIS INVESTI-GATION.
THEY RAN A SEARCH...
...ON THOSE WHO SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED A FEW DAYS AFTER THE BOMBING, AND ON THOSE WITH SUSPICIOUS PERSONAL RECORDS.
BINGO, HUH?
YES.
THESE SIX MEN ALSO SHOWED UP ON A CERTAIN DOCUMENT BELONGING TO...
...THE DGIM.*
THEIR NAMES WERE FORGED, BUT THE PHOTOS WERE THE SAME AS THE PHOTOS ON THE STAFF LIST.
THEY INTENTIONALLY PARTICIPATED IN THE CEREMONY.

*DGIM - *DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE INTELIGENCIA MILITAR*; THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE OF VENEZUELA

AND ON THE DAY OF THE BOMBING, THEY WERE IN CHARGE OF SECURITY FOR THE STAGE.
THESE SIX MEN...
...LEFT THE INTELLIGENCE BUREAU TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE BOMBING, AS IF IT WERE PREARRANGED.
...
...NO.
YOU GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, KID.
JUST STAY HOME PLUCKING YOUR NOSE HAIRS AND SHE'LL PUT 'EM ALL AWAY AND COME RIGHT BACK.
FUCK, IS THAT IT?
YOU GUYS ARE SCARED OF THESE SMALL-TIMERS?
AGAINST FOUR EYES, THEY'RE NOT EVEN A PIECE OF CAKE, THEY'RE TWINKIES.
YES, YOUNG MASTER.
I WISH IT WERE AS EASY AS YOU SAY.
BUT THE STORY DOESN'T END THERE. FABIOLA?
PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
IT IS A PHOTO I RECEIVED FROM THE GENERAL IN QUESTION.
IT WAS TAKEN SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE BOMBING AT THE *BOLIVAR GRANDE* IN CENTRAL CARACAS.
COINCIDENTALLY, IT WAS TAKEN BY A MILITARY POLICE OFFICER INVESTIGATING A SEPARATE CORRUPTION CASE.

...THE HISPANIC MAN ON THE FAR RIGHT IS...
MAJOR MARCOS JOSÉ LUCIENDEZ OF THE DGIM.
THE FIVE MEN AT THE SCENE WERE HIS MEN.
OF THE OTHER FOUR MEN, WE ONLY KNOW THE NAME OF ONE.
SO ROBERTA ...
... ROBERTA?
GOOD. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

YOUNG MASTER.
OH...
I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN.
WHAT IS THERE TO WORRY ABOUT, YOUNG MASTER?
ROBERTA ...
I'M... WORRIED.
MR. HIDALGO WILL TAKE OVER MANAGEMENT OF THE MINE, AND...
...WITH SO MANY OFFERING TO HELP SINCE THE FUNERAL, THE FARM IS...
...
ROBERTA ...?
ARE YOU OKAY?
ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?
NO.
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING. I'M SORRY.

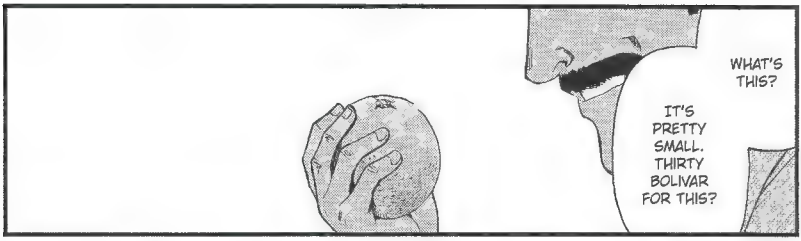
...YOU, ROBERTA.
NO. WHAT I'M...
...WORRIED ABOUT IS...
WHEN YOU EAT, WHEN YOU'RE ON BREAK.
...YOU'VE STOPPED TALKING.
SINCE MY FATHER'S FUNERAL...
YOU PROBABLY DON'T REALIZE IT, BUT...
SQUEEZE
THAT'S WHY ...
I...?
...
YOUNG MASTER.
...IN ROANAPUR?
DO YOU...
...REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT...

...UH HUH.
I REMEMBER.
A LOT...
...HAPPENED THAT NIGHT.
SO I WON'T FORGET.
...I CAN'T FORGET.
...
...YOUNG MASTER.
I'M SORRY TO SAY THIS NOW...
THE MASTER ...
...WAS AGAINST ME GOING THERE...
...UNTIL THE VERY END.
I KNOW.
IF I...
...WERE IN HIS POSITION...
...I WOULD'VE SAID THE SAME THING.

AH...
THE BOTH OF YOU...
WHAT?
NOTHING.
YOUNG MASTER ...
YOU REALLY ARE HIS SON.
...HEY, RO-BERTA?
THINGS ARE HARD NOW...
...BUT MR. HIDALGO AND FABIOLA WILL DO THEIR BEST.
THE PEOPLE AT THE MINE AND THE PLANTATION... AND...
THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE THAT'LL HELP US.
THINGS WILL BE BETTER TOMORROW. SO...
SO ...
ROBERTA ?
YOU WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE, RIGHT?

...YES.
YOUNG MASTER.
ROBERTA ...
...WILL ALWAYS BE NEAR YOU.

THE DAY AFTER WE RECEIVED THAT REPORT...
SHE...
...DISAPPEARED FROM THE MANSION.



Chapter 50: El Baile de la Muerte - Part VII

DON'T BOTHER!
I'LL BE BACK AGAIN.
C'MON NOW.
THD
HEH HEH ...
...WHOA!
YOU ...
WORK AROUND HERE?
I COULD GIVE YOU A LIFT TO YOUR MANSION...
...?
WHOA, WHOA!
I'M SORRY MISS.
NO, PLEASE.
IT WAS MY FAULT.

...
W...
WHAT?
I RECOGNIZE ...
...YOUR FACE.
ONCE I...
...SEE SOMEONE'S FACE...
...I NEVER FORGET IT. IT IS A PROFESSIONAL HABIT...
HMPH!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
YOU DRUNK THIS EARLY IN THE DAY?
I'M OUTTA HERE.
GO BACK TO YOUR MANSION ON YOUR OWN!

SHIT!
...I DON'T LIKE THIS!
I KNOW!
PU
PU
PU
NOBODY SHOULD KNOW I'M HERE!
WAS IT ONE OF MY GUYS?!
MENDEZ SHOULD BE AT EL SOMBRERO ...
I'LL ASK HIM WHERE THEY ARE...
PRRP
PRRP
PRRP
PRRP
PICK UP, MENDEZ!
C'MON! C'MON! C'MON!
BEEP♫
PRP ...
MENDEZ?! IT'S ME!
IT'S LUCIENDEZ! WHERE ARE MY MEN–

AS I SAID...
...ONCE I SEE A FACE I NEVER FORGET IT.
YOU WERE AT THE FOUNDING CELEBRATION.
DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE INTELIGENCIA MILITAR.
MAJOR MARCOS JOSÉ LUCIENDEZ.

...WHY I HAVE THIS CELLULAR PHONE?
...WANT TO ASK ME...
... DON'T YOU...
...
HOW DO YOU...?!
WHO
HA
P

GRIND
TWIST
URGH!
AGH!
STARTING WITH MR. MENDEZ...
...I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET ALL YOUR MEN.
...
YOU...
...HAVE THE INFORMATION I AM SEEKING.
...BUT IN THE END, IT SEEMS ONLY YOU...
DON'T TELL ME YOU...
NO!
WE AGREED TO AVOID EACH OTHER UNTIL THE MISSION WAS OFFICIALLY COMPLETED!
YOU TRACKED EVERYONE DOWN... AND KILLED THEM?!

MAJOR.
YOU KNOW WHAT I NEED TO KNOW.
SPILL YOUR GUTS TO ME RIGHT NOW...
...AND I WILL BE PERFECTLY SATISFIED.
I DIDN'T TELL THE OFFICER...
...ABOUT ROBERTA'S DISAPPEARANCE.
I REQUESTED HE NOTIFY ME ONCE HE LOCATED THE MEN IN THE PHOTO.
THAT NOTIFICATION CAME QUICKLY.
JOSÉ LUCIENDEZ, THE MAN ON THE FAR RIGHT.
HIS BODY WAS FOUND IN A RIVER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CARABOSO.
HE WAS...
...FOUND WITH SEVERE WOUNDS BELOW HIS KNEES.
HE WAS TORTURED, KIDDO.
THE KIND OF TORTURE EVEN THE GESTAPO WOULD RUN AWAY FROM BARE-FOOTED.
SHE IDENTIFIED THE MEN OF THE INTELLIGENCE BUREAU FROM A SINGLE PHOTO...
...AND HUNTED THEM DOWN.
LIKE THE BLOODHOUND SHE TRULY IS.

SHE IS NOT A "BLOOD-HOUND."
SHE IS A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY.
PLEASE...
REFRAIN FROM USING SUCH WORDS FROM NOW ON.
...
MY APOLOGIES, SEÑOR GARCIA.
LET'S GET BACK TO THE TOPIC AT HAND.
WE STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN OUR MAID ACROSS THE OCEAN YET.

...
BACK TO THE DISCUSSION.
PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THIS PHOTO ONE MORE TIME.
THERE ARE FOUR CAUCASIAN MEN BESIDES LUCIENDEZ.
WITH LUCIENDEZ'S BODY FOUND AND THE WHEREABOUTS OF FOUR OF HIS MEN STILL UNKNOWN...
...ONLY THE SECOND MAN FROM THE RIGHT WAS TRACKED DOWN...
...
YOU KNOW...
US
YOU KNOW WHO I AM.
FWOOOO
KRACKLE
...THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, NSA.
SPECIAL OFFICE OF CENTRAL AMERICAN POLICY ANALYSIS AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS, OFFICER IN CHARGE.
FWOOOO
ARMY COLONEL SIMON DICKENS.

FW
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU'RE NOT A ROBBER OR KIDNAPPER.
I'M SURPRISED YOU KNOW ALL THAT.
HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YOU.
YOU BANDERA ROJAS? OR AN MVR EXTREMIST?
KRKL
KRKL
KRKL
TONK
WHAT'RE YOU...
...!
NO, WAIT...
ACCORDING TO WHAT MARCOS TOLD ME...
THE TERRORIST BOMBING IN CARACAS LAST SEPTEMBER ...
...WAS PLANNED AND EXECUTED BY YOU AND YOUR DOGS.
SO WHERE ...
...ARE YOUR DOGS?

FWOOT
IT WOULD SAVE A GREAT DEAL OF HASSLE IF YOU WOULD TELL ME...
...WHILE THE STOVE IS STILL AT BODY TEMPERATURE.
FZZ
FZZ
FZZ
WHERE ARE YOUR DOGS?
...
KEEP TALKING...
...YOU ROTTEN PIECE OF SHIT.
KLNK
...THAT'S NUMBER TWO.
WHERE ARE YOUR DOGS?
AAH!
AAARGH !!

KRKL
KRKL
KTNG
TINK
...
I-IF YOU...
...INSIST ON PURSUING THIS...
ZR OK
Y-YOU'LL END UP TAKING ON THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!
YOU UNDER-STAND ME?!
KRKL
THE MAN...
...SITTING IN THE OVAL OFFICE...
KRNCH
KRNCH
RATTLE
YOU'LL TURN THE STATES AGAINST YOU!
KRKL
...ON THE BANKS OF THE POTOMAC IS GONNA BLOW YOUR ASS ALL THE WAY TO ARIZONA!
YOU...
CRAZY GOD-DAMNED BITCH!

KT
OK
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
BY THE WAY...
WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER?

A BODY WAS FOUND AT THE SCENE OF A FIRE AT A MOTEL OUTSIDE CARACAS.
...IT WAS...
...COLONEL SIMON DICKENS.
HE WAS...
...AN ACTIVE OFFICER...
...OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

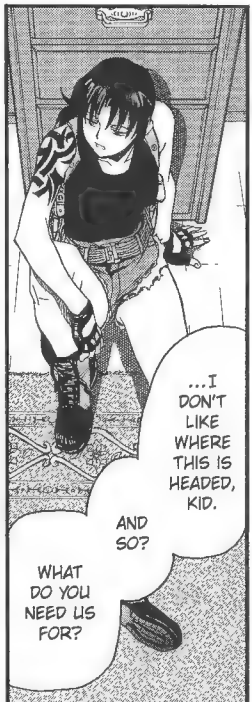
Chapter 51: El Baile de la Muerte – Part VIII

ACCORDING TO THE PARATROOP OFFICER WHO BROUGHT THIS TO MY ATTENTION...
...THE MAIN SUSPECT WAS A WOMAN...
...WHO WAS SEEN FLEEING THE SCENE JUST BEFORE THE FIRE WAS REPORTED.
SHE HAD A TICKET TO THAILAND FROM CARACAS, VIA MIAMI.
THEY ALSO DISCOVERED SHE HAD RESERVED A LONG DISTANCE BUS TICKET TO ROANAPUR AT THE AIRPORT.

...
YOU'RE CERTAIN HE WAS...
...AN ACTIVE OFFICER?

ABSOLUTELY.
HE WAS A ONE OF THE MILITARY ATTACHES.

THE YOUNG MASTER IS VERY CONCERNED...
WE WOULD-
...ABOUT THE HEAD MATRON'S DISAPPEARANCE- NO, ABOUT HER ATTEMPT AT REVENGE.
AS WE MENTIONED EARLIER, OUR ONLY WISH IS FOR THE HEAD MATRON TO RETURN TO THE MANSION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
THIS IS A STRANGE LAND FOR US. WE CANNOT FIND WHAT WE NEED WITHOUT ASSISTANCE.


...I DON'T LIKE WHERE THIS IS HEADED, KID.
AND SO?
WHAT DO YOU NEED US FOR?

THE ONLY PEOPLE HERE WE CAN ASK FOR HELP ARE YOU.
NO...
NO, ONLY THAT JAPANESE GENTLEMAN, TO BE PRECISE.
PLEASE.
LEND US A HAND IN THE SEARCH FOR OUR FAMILY'S HEAD MATRON.
WE UNDERSTAND THIS REQUEST IS DIFFERENT FROM YOUR PRIMARY BUSINESS.
THEREFORE WE ARE PREPARED TO PAY APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION. PLEASE-
...
I SEE.
MR. CHANG.
I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE SO CONCERNED.
THIS IS A GREAT BIG PANDORA'S BOX...
...WITH ENOUGH TROUBLE IN IT TO FILL UP ALL THE SHELVES AT SEARS.
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY.
WE DON'T WANT ANY PART OF THIS.
BUT...
WHY...?

WHY? YOUR HEAD MATRON'S ...
...PLANNING ON TAKING ON EVERYBODY'S FRIEND UNCLE SAM WITH HER BARE HANDS.
EXACTLY.
SHE'S UP AGAINST THE UNITED STATES' UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE FORCES.
NO...
MAYBE SOMETHING EVEN MORE THAN THAT.
IT'S ABSOLUTELY CRAZY. WHO'D WANT ANY PART OF THAT MADNESS?
THAT IS ALL THE MORE REASON...
...TO STOP HER.
KNOWING THAT SHE'S KILLING PEOPLE...
...PAINS ME AS MUCH AS LOSING MY FATHER.

SHE IS...
...FAMILY TO ME.
AND THE ONLY PERSON IN THIS WORLD...
PLP
PLP
...WHO CAN SAVE HER IS ME.
...
SHE...
SHE ALSO TOLD ME... SHE WOULD BE WITH ME FOREVER...
SHE SAID WE WOULD ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!
AW, CUT IT OUT.
WHAT'S UP WITH YOU?
YOU CAME HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD TO START BAWLING?
FINE THEN, CRY ME A RIVER.
MAYBE A HERO WILL POP OUT OF A MARVEL COMIC.
GO AHEAD, TRY IT. IT MIGHT BE WORTH A SHOT.

WHY YOU...!
FABIOLA...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
...I'M SORRY.
YOU ARE RIGHT...
IF YOU ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT ACCEPT THE TASK...
...WE WILL NOT INSIST ANY FURTHER.
WE WILL CONTINUE OUR SEARCH FOR HELP ON OUR OWN.
I THANK YOU FOR COMING.
...
YOU'VE...
...CHANGED QUITE A BIT SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU. YOU'RE...
...ALMOST LIKE AN ADULT.

...
MY FATHER PASSED AWAY AND ROBERTA DISAPPEARED.
ALL THE PEOPLE I'VE COME TO RELY ON...
...ARE ALL GONE.
THAT IS WHY...
...I'VE HAD TO GROW UP FASTER THAN I SHOULD HAVE.
THAT'S ALL.
...I SEE.
ROCK.
IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY?
I DON'T THINK LETTING THESE TWO KIDS RUN AROUND IN A TOWN LIKE THIS IS A SMART IDEA.

...LEAVE THIS MATTER TO US AND RETURN TO THEIR MANSION IN VENEZUELA.
THIS WHOLE THING IS BREAKING MY HEART.
IF I HAD MY WAY, I'D LOVE TO SEE THEM...
HEH.
WAS IT THAT OBVIOUS, DUTCH?
I KNOW YOU DON'T THINK THAT IN THE SLIGHTEST.
YEAH RIGHT, MR. CHANG.
THAT MAID IS SOMETHING ELSE.
EVERYBODY KNOWS FRY-FACE MOBILIZED HER COMMANDOS THE LAST TIME SHE WAS HERE.
WELL ...
THE COLOMBIANS, LIKE SEÑOR GARCIA, ARE AFTER THE MAID.
SO EVERYONE IN TOWN IS AWFULLY NERVOUS.
IT'S BETTER TO PLUCK THE SEED OF THEIR WORRIES EARLY.
IT'S OBVIOUS THEY'LL CLASH WITH THIS LITTLE BOY SOONER OR LATER.
THAT'S NOT GOOD FOR THIS TOWN OR FOR US.

YOU'RE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THIS TOWN, WITH ALL KINDS OF ACCESS DUE TO THE NATURE OF YOUR BUSINESS...
PLUS YOU'RE IN A NEUTRAL ENOUGH POSITION THAT IT WON'T COMPLICATE MATTERS ANY FURTHER.
C'MON NOW, DUTCH. YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER.
WE'RE TOO BIG TO MOVE AROUND LIKE THAT.
BUT ...
THIS HASN'T GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH US. RUNNING THIS TOWN IS YOUR CONCERN.
WHY DON'T YOU TWO PARTNER UP? THAT'LL MAKE THINGS EASIER.
AND YOU'RE HARMLESS.
BRINGING YOU IN TO HELP IS JUST WHAT WE NEEDED. ISN'T THAT RIGHT...
...ROCK?

I CAN'T FORCE YOU. IT'S ALL...
...UP TO YOU.
OF COURSE...
IF A PROBLEM DOES OCCUR, WE CAN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT.
IF YOU SAY YOU WON'T DO IT, WE'LL SEARCH FOR HER IN OUR OWN WAY.
AND OF COURSE THOSE TWO OVER THERE CAN GO ABOUT IT HOWEVER THEY WANT AS WELL. BUT...
WE HAVE A REPUTATION TO UPHOLD. WE CAN'T AGITATE THE CARTEL WITHOUT A REASON.
GARCIA WANTS HER BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
...
THIS TOWN WANTS THE MAID OUT OF HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IF WE CAN CATCH UP TO HER BEFORE SHE REACHES THOSE SOLDIERS...
WE'LL HAVE EVERYTHING WRAPPED UP NICE AND NEAT.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MR. CHANG?
THERE'S STILL ONE LOOSE END, ROCK.
THE SOLDIERS ARE STILL ON THE SHELF.
DUTCH IS RIGHT. YOU WANNA DIVE HEAD FIRST INTO A PILE OF SHIT?
YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN TAKE ON FOUR EYES WITH A SMILE ON YOUR FACE?
SHE'S AS CROSS-EYED AS THE ROAD RUNNER ON SPEED.
YOU COME ACROSS HER LOOKIN' STUPID AND SHE'LL SHOOT YOU FULL OF HOLES BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN OPEN YOUR MOUTH.
UH...
HOLD ON A SECOND, GUYS.

IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVE TO DECIDE RIGHT NOW, YEAH?
WE CAN COME BY AGAIN ONCE WE MAKE OUR DECISION.
EITHER WAY, ARGUING ABOUT IT NOW ONLY TROUBLES GARCIA.
HE'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.
TAKE SOME TIME TO THINK IT OVER.
SH F
AND...
IF YOU CAN'T SECURE HIS ASSISTANCE, YOU TWO NEED TO GET OUT OF TOWN QUICK.
THE COLOMBIANS WILL BE HERE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. A SNEAK ATTACK WON'T WORK ANYMORE.
YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO WHAT ADULTS HAVE TO SAY.
ROCK.
THAT BOY'LL HAVE GRAY HAIRS BEFORE HE TURNS TWENTY.
THINK HARD ABOUT IT, WILL YOU.

LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND.
WELL THEN, YOUNG MASTER.
GREAT BROTHER CHANG.
WILL HE DO IT?
OH YEAH.
THAT'S THE KIND OF GUY HE IS.
CARING. COMPASSIONATE. PRETTY RARE IN THIS TOWN...
BIU.

...NO, THAT'S...
...NOT HIM...
WHO DO WE...
...CONTACT ?
IN ANY CASE...
OUR GHOSTS FINALLY HAVE A NAME.
FIRST WE DO A LITTLE INVESTIGATING OF THE YOUNG MASTER'S NEW SAFEHOUSE.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PLAY OUR PART.
THOSE GHOSTS ARE SKILLED SOLDIERS.
THE SMART THING TO DO IS SEND SOLDIERS OUT AGAINST SOLDIERS.
WE HAVE TO MOVE THE PIECES ON THE BOARD CAREFULLY.

VR
M M M
WE'LL KEEP IT AS SOMETHING TO DO BETWEEN JOBS.
IT'S THE SAME AS FINDING A MISSING CAT.
...IT WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM... IF THIS WERE A CAT.
MAYBE.
THIS IS MORE LIKE...
...A SIBERIAN TIGER.
POFF
...THAT'S NOT...
...WHAT DUTCH IS TRYING TO SAY.
IT'S WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU STICK YOUR NECK OUT TO FIND THE CAT.
KTNG
HE MEANS THE SECOND YOU OPEN THE CLOSET...
YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE MATTER OF THE TROOPS, HAVE YOU?
YOU MIGHT GET BITTEN CLEAN IN HALF.

VR
BUT-!
AS LONG AS I'M YOUR BOSS, THERE'S NO ARGUING IT.
THIS IS DELICATE, LIKE BRAIN SURGERY. IT'S A MATTER THAT CONCERNS ALL OF US.
IF THEY...
...REACH HER BEFORE YOU DO...
WALK AWAY.
...
I'LL SAY THIS, ROCK.
ROCK.
THERE'S A FLOW TO THINGS JUST LIKE WATER.
IF YOU DIG A CHANNEL TO TRY AND CHANGE THE FLOW...
...IT CAN CHANGE DRASTICALLY EVEN IF THAT CHANNEL'S AS SHALLOW AS A GUTTER...
IT'LL BECOME AN UNPREDICTABLE CURRENT THAT COULD COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU.
THE BOTTOM LINE IS...
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO THE YOUNG MASTER OR THAT LITTLE MAID...
WE HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR OURSELVES.

VM
MM
M
M
IF YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT...
...I WANT YOU OFF MY BOAT FOR GOOD.
THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY. THE REST IS UP TO YOU.
FABIOLA.
HAS MR. ROCK...
SHP
IT'S JUST A WASTE OF TIME EVEN TO HOPE FOR IT.
JUST LIKE IN THE BARRIO. PEOPLE LIKE THEM ARE ALL LYING COWARDS.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO TRUSTING, YOUNG MASTER.
SHALL I ASK THE FRONT DESK?
IT'LL BE THE FOURTH TIME SINCE SUNRISE?
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M GLAD YOU'VE COME TO YOUR SENSES.
BUT WE CAN'T BE SITTING HERE DOING NOTHING...
I WILL MAKE ANOTHER TRIP THROUGH TOWN. PERHAPS I WILL FIND A CLUE THAT WILL LEAD US TO THE HEAD MATRON.
...
I SEE...
SO-
CHK

I WAS GOING TO CALL BUT...
...IT'S ALMOST NOON AND I THOUGHT IT'D BE QUICKER IF I JUST CAME OVER.
SO, HERE WE ARE!
...IS SOMETHING WRONG?

WH
R
...GIMME A BREAK, SIR.
WHY IS SHE THE ONLY KID IN THIS VILLAGE WE GOTTA LET LIVE?
OR ARE WE PLAYING HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL?
AND YOU'RE SECOND LIEUTENANT MOTHER GOOSE.

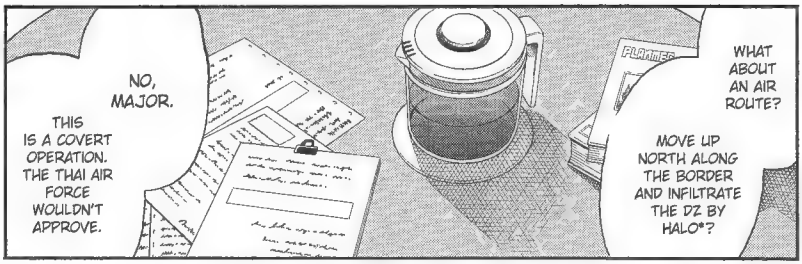
Chapter 52: El Baile de la Muerte - Part IX

LARKIN.
I GET IT NOW. YOU'RE...
...USING WAR AS AN EXCUSE TO REVEL IN YOUR CRIMES.
YOU'RE BENEATH CONTEMPT, NOTHING BUT A PETTY LITTLE THUG.
ĐÉNG VIỆT NAM!

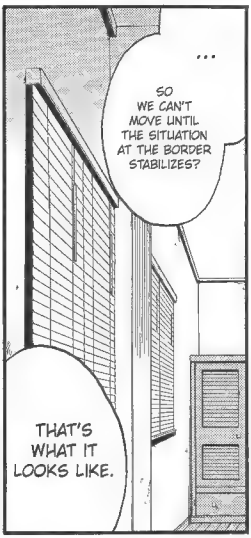
Chapter 52: El Baile de la Muerte - Part IX

CAXTON
!!

KLK
...
...
ANY FOLLOW UP FROM THE OFFICER ON DUTY?
GOOD MORNING, MAJOR.
COFFEE?
YES, PLEASE.
IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.
CROSSING THE BORDER INTO THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE FROM MYANMAR LOOKS DIFFICULT.
THE AREA'S STILL TENSE AFTER THAT SHOOTING INCIDENT EARLIER THIS MONTH ON THE LAOTIAN BORDER.


NO, MAJOR.
THIS IS A COVERT OPERATION. THE THAI AIR FORCE WOULDN'T APPROVE.
WHAT ABOUT AN AIR ROUTE?
MOVE UP NORTH ALONG THE BORDER AND INFILTRATE THE DZ BY HALO*?

WHAT'S THE OFFICER ON DUTY SAYING?
ANY MORE DELAYS MEANS WE'LL HAVE TO ABORT.
WE'RE STRAYING FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM OUR INITIAL OPERATION PLAN.
THIS IS TOO UNPREDICT-ABLE. WE HAVE LESS THAN A WEEK.



SHIT!
WE'RE IN A SITUATION WHERE SUCCESS CAN'T BE GUARANTEED. WHAT ARE THEY IN SUCH A HURRY FOR?
HE SAYS THEY'RE "ON STANDBY UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED."

I JUST PRAY THIS DOESN'T TURN INTO ANOTHER *OPERATION EAGLE CLAW.*
GIVE ME A BREAK.
IT'S POLITICS, MAJOR. I KNOW...IT'S RIDICULOUS.
WE'RE STEPPING INTO WHAT USED TO BE THE CIA'S TERRITORY.

*HALO: *HIGH ALTITUDE LOW OPENING*—A DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS PARACHUTING TECHNIQUE

I'M SORRY ?
WHAT'S THIS TOWN CALLED?
IT WAS A COMPLETE MESS. COLEMAN AND DUFFY BARNEY DIED IN THE CRASH.
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.
ROANAPUR, MAJOR.
...PLACE MAKES ME SICK.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS THAILAND.
RAY.
WHAT'S THE NAME OF THIS PLACE?

AND THEN I FINALLY REALIZED. THIS PLACE...
IT'S EXACTLY LIKE IT WAS BACK THEN.
I WAS DREAMING ABOUT BEING BACK IN 'NAM. I WONDERED WHY I WOULD BE DREAMING OF THAT.
I HAD A BAD DREAM THIS MORNING, RAY.

I THOUGHT THAT TOO.
THIS TOWN IS JUST LIKE SAIGON.
MAJOR.

IT HAS THE SAME STENCH AS SAIGON IN 1969.
THE ONLY THING THAT'S DIFFERENT IS THE LANGUAGE AND THERE ARE NO COPS DIRECTING TRAFFIC.
IT'S REPULSIVE ...
... SICKENING.
WHY HAVE YOU BEEN STARING AT ME?
WHAT DID I DO?
I GUESS I DIDN'T GIVE YOU A CLEAR ANSWER YESTERDAY, DID I?
DID I WORRY YOU?
... NOTHING.
I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO COME.

...I DUNNO.
I JUST THOUGHT ...
"IT MIGHT BE FUN."
WHNK
I DIDN'T EXPECT ANYONE LIVING HERE TO AGREE TO OUR REQUEST.
...WITH ALL DUE RESPECT.
BUT...
WHY EXACTLY ARE YOU HERE?
?
VRGRG
ANYWAY...
LET'S START AT BAO'S. IT'S THE FIRST PLACE ROBERTA WAS SIGHTED IN ROANAPUR.

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO BREAK.
THE HELL'RE YOU DOING HERE?
THE BAR AND THE WHOREHOUSE ARE SHUT DOWN THANKS TO THAT LITTLE GIRL RIGHT THERE.
I GOT NOTHING TO DO, SO I'M COOLING OFF WITH SOME OF THE LADIES FROM UPSTAIRS.
UHH...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
IT WAS LIKE... COLLATERAL DAMAGE...
UH, HOW SHOULD I PUT IT...?
UM...
FABIOLA?
DID YOU-
THD
THD
THD
OH MY, OH MY!
GUESTS ?
THE WAY THE FRONT OF THE BAR IS DESTROYED DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SIMPLE COLLATERAL DAMAGE.
I ASKED YOU TO BE AS DISCREET AS POSSIBLE...
AH?!
NO NO NO NO! IT WASN'T INTENTIONAL!

SEIZE
OH, SORRY, FLORA.
THE JAPANESE GUY'S WITH LAGOON TRADERS...
MMM! I KNOW, I KNOW! I'VE HEARD ALL ABOUT YOU!
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
YOU SHOULD'VE TOLD ME WE WERE EXPECTING COMPANY, BAO!
WHERE ARE THEY FROM?
INTRODUCE ME!
♥
GK
GK
GK
GK
GK
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO MY PLACE BEFORE, HAVE YOU?
I'M MADAME FLORA. I RUN THE SLOPPY SWING UP-STAIRS. YOU CAN CALL ME FLORA.
YOU SHOULD COME BY AFTER WE'RE DONE WITH THE REPAIRS.
CALL US BEFOREHAND AND I'LL HAVE SOME PRETTY GIRLS WAITING FOR YOU! AH, IF ONLY I WERE A BIT YOUNGER, I'D SERVICE YOU MYSELF!
♥
IT'S SO NICE TO BE YOUNG. YOUR SKIN IS SO SMOOTH!
♥
?
?
OHH, AND WHAT HAVE YOU GOT DOWN HERE? ARE YOU HIDING SOMETHING BIG IN THERE?
UGH!
BO
NK
PLEASE!
BACK TO BUSINESS!

UH, MADAME?
OH, PLEASE, CALL ME FLORA.
ALL RIGHT, FLORA. UMM...
I'LL STOP BY SOMETIME, BUT I NEED TO SPEAK TO BAO-
OH, IS THAT RIGHT?
SORRY ABOUT THAT. SHE JUST LOVES TO TALK.
SO?
WHAT IS IT?
THAT'S TOO BAD, BUT I'LL LET YOU GO.
PLEASE DO COME BY. YOU'LL HAVE A MUCH BETTER TIME WITH US THAN OVER AT THAT BASTARD ROWAN'S PLACE.
OKAY, THANK YOU.
ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER DAY...
BAO.
WE'RE LOOKING FOR LEADS TO THE MAID.
SPLASH
BAO.
I DON'T WANT ANY MORE TROUBLE.
YOU WERE THE FIRST PERSON IN ROANAPUR TO SEE THE MAID AND YOU SERVED HER, RIGHT?

FUCK OFF, ASSHOLE.
PLEASE, BAO.
OR...?
I DON'T FUCKIN' REMEMBER.
BESIDES, I GOT NO REASON TO TALK ABOUT THAT WITH YOU.
I WON'T HOLD ANYTHING BACK FROM YOU, AND YOU DO THE SAME FOR ME. CALL IT BARTER.
PLUS THIS IS A PERSONAL REQUEST FROM THE TRIAD'S MR. CHANG.
IS THERE A REASON YOU CAN'T SAY ANYTHING?
...
I ALREADY TOLD BIU, BUT...ALL RIGHT.
BUT UNDER ONE CONDITION.
IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG WITH THIS, YOU GOTTA PROMISE TO KEEP ME OUT OF IT.
OF COURSE.
FINE.
I WANT THAT IN WRITING. MY ASS IS ON THE LINE HERE.
SO, WHEN SHE CAME IN...
TO
Agave

KLA
TT
ER
ARE YOU INSANE?
THIS AIN'T THE DARRA ARMS MARKET. NOBODY'LL SELL YOU A GUN WITHOUT THE RIGHT INTRODUCTION.
ALL THE PLACES I NEED TO VISIT TO START A WAR.
I SAID, PLEASE TELL ME...
SKRK
WHAT DID YOU...
...JUST SAY?
...WELL.
YOU CAN PROVIDE ME WITH AN INTRO-DUCTION.
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING.
THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL-
!
AR
AL

KRNCH
KRSHH
KRNCH
KRSHH
PERHAPS YOU THINK...
...THIS IS A JOKE OR A WHIM?
WHILE I WAS MAKING CALLS FOR HER INTRODUCTION...
...SHE WAS CHOMPING ON PILLS THE WHOLE TIME. LIKE THEY WERE DORITOS.
I CALLED PRAIYACHAT, TOH CHI...
DOC HEARTLAND, THE UNDER-GROUND DOCTOR... THAT WAS FOR THOSE PILLS.
YEAH, PROBABLY. BUT I DIDN'T ASK FOR SPECIFICS. NOT THAT I'D WANNA KNOW.
...I SEE. THANKS A LOT. I'LL RETURN THE FAVOR SOON.
OH...
HEY!
I JUST REALIZED SOMETHING.
WHERE'S TWO HAND?
WHAT? YOU GUYS HAVE A FIGHT?

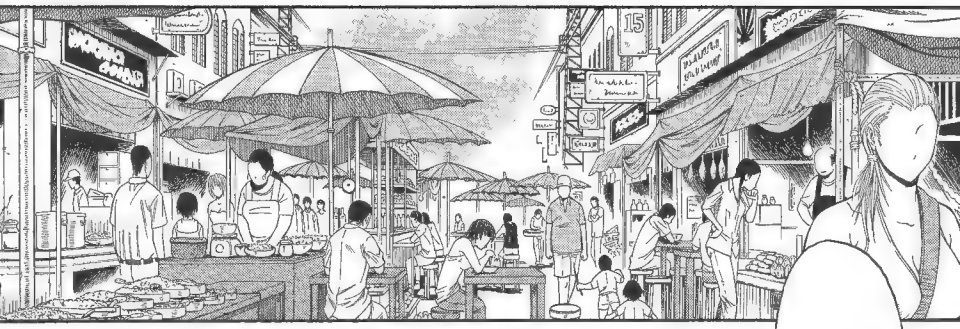
OH.
YOU MEAN REVY?
SHE...
THIS SUCKS.
FULL-BOAT, BABY.
THAT MEANS I'VE MADE 230 BUCKS TODAY.
AWW.
FUCK YOU.
WHENEVER YOU START RAISING LIKE CRAZY, YOU USUALLY GOT JACK SHIT.
YOUR "TELL" IS SO EASY TO READ.
SHUT THE FUCK UP.
TAP
TAP
HEHE.
"FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER."
WHY DIDN'T YOU GO WITH ROCK, TWO HAND?
WHY SHOULD I?
HE'S WAY TOO SYMPATHETIC.
REALLY? I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION...
...IT WAS YOUR JOB TO STICK TO HIS ASS LIKE A DINGLEBERRY WHEREVER HE GOES.
BLACK RIDGE

HEY BITCH.
YOU'VE BEEN NEEDING A NEW SET NOSTRILS, HAVEN'T YOU? STEP OUTSIDE.
HEE HEE HEE.
WHAT AN AMAZING FLOOD OF BULLSHIT.
ZWP
ZWP
...BUT ANYWAY...
IT WAS AT MR. CHANG'S REQUEST, RIGHT?
YOU GOTTA BE CRAZY TO SAY NO TO THAT.
BESIDES, IF HE CLEANS UP THIS MESS WITH THE MAID, HE COULD MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF.
TAP TAP
YOU MORON, THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM.
HE GOES POKING AROUND IN THE WRONG WAY...
...WE ALL GO DOWN IN FLAMES AS ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY.
WHAT'RE YOU SCARED OF, REVY?
YOU'VE FACED OFF AGAINST THE MAID BEFORE.
FLIP
FOUR EYES IS NOTHING.
THE PROBLEM IS THE GUYS SHE'S AFTER.
FLIK
UNLUCKY BASTARDS, GOIN' AFTER THAT MONSTER...
WHAT'D THEY DO?
FLIP
THEY BLEW THE MAID'S MASTER TO THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON. USS ARIZONA HERE WE COME.
IT WAS...
ZWP!
...UNCLE SAM...
...AND HIS JOLLY TOY SOLDIERS.

...
I... SEE...
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
THE MAID'S PISSED OFF AS HELL.
AND?
WHAT DO THESE SOLDIERS WANT IN THIS SHIT HOLE?
SHE'S PLANNING ON MAKING GRADE A HAMBURGER OUT OF 'EM.
THAT'S WHAT'S UP.
...THE UNITED STATES ...
... MILITARY?
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.
...NO FUN AT ALL.
I DUNNO.
BUT CHANG'S ALL WORRIED ABOUT IT. WHATEVER THE REASON...
...NOTHING GOOD EVER COMES OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT GETTING INVOLVED.
...
HEY, REVY...
WHAT?
YOU AREN'T FOLDING ON ME, ARE YOU, EDA?!

CONSIDERING WHAT HE'S UP AGAINST...
YOU SHOULD HELP HIM OUT.
NO.
I'M TALKING ABOUT HIM.
FLIP
FLIP
OR ELSE WHEN THE SHIT HITS THE FAN, HE WON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S ALWAYS GOT A RAIN CHECK IN HIS POCKET.
GIMME A BREAK.
HE NEEDS TO GET HIS ASS KICKED ONCE IN A WHILE.
CALL IT.
HE STEPS INTO A PILE OF SHIT AND SLIPS...
...IT'S NOT GONNA BE...
CONSIDER IT AN IMPORTANT LESSON IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT.
YOU KNOW, REVY...
IF HE'S GOING UP AGAINST THE STARS AND STRIPES HE'S REALLY IN TROUBLE.
..."LOOK AT HIS STUPID ASS, HA HA HA."
CALL IT.
I KNOW. SHUT UP.
IF SPARKS ARE GONNA FLY, AT LEAST LET HIM KNOW WHICH WAY THE WIND'S BLOWING.
I'M PRETTY SURE MR. CHANG ASKED HIM TO EXPECT THAT.

I GIVE HIM THREE DAYS TOPS BEFORE HE COMES BACK WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS.
...ANYTHING AT ALL?
WHO'D TELL AN IDIOT LIKE THAT, SWANNING AROUND LIKE HE'S ON SOME KIND OF PICNIC...
THAT CREAM-PUFF WALKING AROUND TOWN DRAGGING TWO KIDS WITH HIM?
THINK ABOUT IT.
...HE WON'T BE ABLE TO DO IT ALONE.
EITHER WAY...
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
...
MAYBE...
THEN...
I PRAY THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS.
...YEAH.
...AHH, THIS SUCKS.
YOU OWE ME TWENTY BUCKS.
...
STRAIGHT FLUSH.



...WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN A BAD MOOD.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ENJOY YOUR MEAL LIKE THAT.
CHEW CHEW
KUK
KUK KUK KUK

KTNK
SEÑOR ROCK.
MAY I SAY ONE THING?
SLURP
...SURE.
WHAT IS IT?
WE'VE BEEN WALKING AROUND ALL DAY...
...AND ALL THREE PLACES WE WERE TOLD ABOUT PRETENDED TO BE CLOSED.
NOW WHY IS THAT?

UM...
THAT'S BECAUSE ...
THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU PROMISED US!
NOT AT ALL!!
2LDK
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? WE SHOW UP WITH A LITTLE GIRL DRESSED LIKE A MAID...
DON'T GET SO UPSET.
...AND A WELL-BRED BOY THEY'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE...
WHO'D WANNA GET INVOLVED WITH SUCH SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS? THIS JUST ISN'T GONNA WORK...
...WITHOUT SOMEBODY LIKE DUTCH OR REVY ALONG WITH US.
...
...I WISH YOU'D TOLD ME THAT SOONER.
YOU DIDN'T ASK.
ANYWAY.
WE CANNOT AFFORD TO STRIKE OUT LIKE THIS. I'LL CONTINUE THE SEARCH ON MY OWN IF I HAVE TO-
...FABIOLA.
YOU SAW HOW THINGS WENT WITH MR. ROCK.
IT'S UNFORTUNATE, BUT WE CAN'T DO THIS ON OUR OWN.
YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, YOUNG MASTER, BUT-
THIS TOWN DOESN'T INTIMIDATE YOU AT ALL, DOES IT?
WHERE DOES THAT NERVE COME FROM?

BARRIO?
IT'S A NICKNAME.
IT'S AN IMPOVERISHED AREA IN THE SUBURBS OF CARACAS.
SHE'S...
FROM THE BARRIO.
...MY HOME IS THE SAME. IT'S FULL OF IDIOTS AND SCUM.
I AM USED TO THIS KIND OF TREATMENT.
MUNCH MUNCH
A FARMER WHO WORKS ON OUR PLANTATION...
...IS A DISTANT RELATIVE OF HERS.
THE MINE IS FINALLY BECOMING FINANCIALLY STABLE, SO...
...WE DECIDED TO INCREASE THE HELP. THAT IS HOW SHE JOINED MY FAMILY.
WELL...
NOT ONLY IS MY FAMILY DIRT POOR, THERE'RE 11 OF US.
SO IF I WENT TO WORK, THERE'D BE LESS BURDEN ON MY FAMILY.
I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL OR FIND A JOB IF I HAD STAYED IN THE BARRIO.
AND SO I'M GRATEFULLY ATTENDING TO THE YOUNG MASTER.
WOW.
SO YOU'VE HAD A HARD LIFE. THAT MIGHT BE WHY YOU SEEM SO STRANGELY PHILOSOPHICAL.
...THAT IS MY STORY.
SO IS THE BARRIO WHERE YOU LEARNED...
...THOSE FANCY KICKS AND HOW TO HANDLE A GUN?

WHOA!
"FANCY KICKS"?
THERE YOU GO AGAIN SAYING THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T!
...!
...UH, YOUNG MASTER.
EVERYBODY SEEMS TO BE FINISHED WITH THEIR MEALS, SO-
HEY FABIOLA.
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT "FANCY KICKS"?
IT'S CAPOEIRA, YOUNG MASTER.
AN ELDERLY MAN WAS ATTENDING A NEARBY SCHOOL.
I PICKED IT UP WATCHING HIM.

CAPOEIRA! I'VE SEEN THAT ON TV!
IT'S THE DANCE-LIKE MARTIAL ART, RIGHT?!
THAT'S SO COOL, FABIOLA! YOU HAVE TO SHOW ME SOME TIME!
BUT...
...WHY LEARN A MARTIAL ART?
AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, MY HOME IS NOT THE SAFEST PLACE.
IT WAS PART FUN AND PART SELF-DEFENSE. PLUS...
...WELL.
I'M SELF-TAUGHT SO IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL.
IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP...
MAYBE, EVEN-TUALLY.
...A GUN IN THE HANDS OF A LAYMAN COULD EASILY KILL SOME-BODY.
CAPOEIRA CANNOT BE PERFORMED EASILY AND SOMEONE TRAINED IN IT KNOWS HOW TO MODERATE IT.
THAT IS WHY...
...I FIGURED IT WAS WORTH LEARNING.
YEAH.
THAT'S A GOOD WAY TO PUT IT, FABIOLA.
I THINK SO TOO.

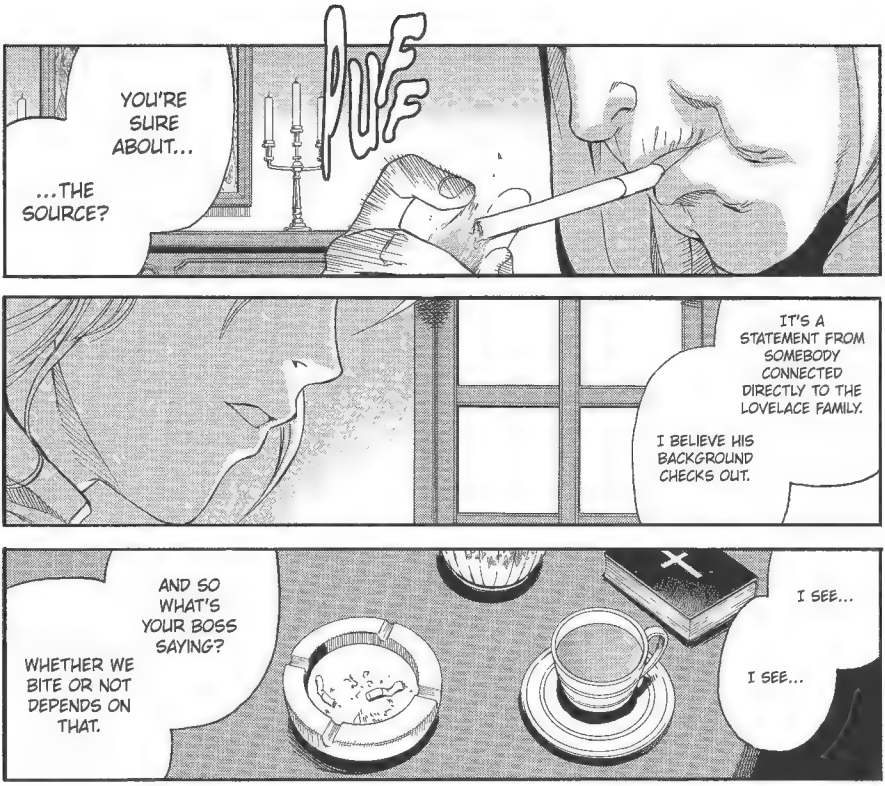
I SEE.
...
I TOTALLY ADMIRE YOUR PRINCIPLES, BUT...
...ACTUALLY APPLYING THEM HERE IN THIS TOWN IS A DIFFERENT STORY.
NOW... IT'S NOT LIKE ME TO DOLE OUT ADVICE.
BUT IF SOMETHING GOES DOWN THAT YOU CAN'T SETTLE THAT WAY, DON'T HESITATE TO PULL THE TRIGGER.
THIS TOWN ISN'T GENEROUS ENOUGH TO ALLOW YOU TO TEST YOURSELF.
BUT...
ACTING ON INSTINCT LIKE THAT ALLOWS FOR BRUTALITY. THAT'S A BAD THING.
ROBERTA COULDN'T RESIST.
I DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN TO FABIOLA AND ME.
TWIST
THAT'S NOT IT. I'VE TOLD YOU THIS BEFORE.
IN TERMS OF RIGHT OR WRONG, THIS TOWN IS ALL WRONG.
IT'S EASY TO MOCK YOUR UNREALISTIC VIEWS, BUT...
I'M JUST SAYING THAT IF THERE'S A GOAL YOU NEED TO ACHIEVE, DEAL WITH IT APPROPRIATELY.
KRRK
OKAY.
DUTCH'LL BE MAD IF WE'RE LATE.
LET'S HEAD BACK AFTER WE DROP THEM OFF AT MR. CHANG'S BOATHOUSE.
IS THAT ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, ROCK?
UH... SURE.

...BENNY.
I'M SURPRISED TO HEAR THAT COMING FROM YOU.
OH YEAH?
IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL SO GREAT WHEN CHILDREN DIE.
CHNK
AND...
THIS IS THE MOST WE CAN DO FOR THEM, IN A WAY.
KCHN
HOW MUCH DO YOU HAVE TO STEEL YOUR SOUL TO GET OVER A STRANGER'S DEATH?
...THAT'S WHY I DON'T INTEND TO TEST MYSELF IN THIS TOWN EITHER.
OR GET TOO DEEPLY INVOLVED LIKE YOU, ROCK.

...I HAVE YET TO THOROUGHLY GRASP THE SITUATION, BUT...
I ASSUME ...
...HE HAS OBTAINED SOME DISTURBING INFOR-MATION...
...PERTAINING TO THE MAID THAT MUST BE ACTED UPON.
AN EXPANDED GATHERING INCLUDING REPS FROM ALL THE AFFILIATES NO LESS?
RIDICULOUS. WHAT IS CHANG THINKING?
...A NETWORK MEETING?
AT THIS TIME OF YEAR?

SUCH A FUSS OVER ONE MAID.
HER TARGET IS NOT SOMEONE WHO LIVES HERE.
HER EMPLOYER WAS KILLED IN A TERRORIST BOMB ATTACK. I BELIEVE SHE CAME HERE FOR REVENGE.
I DON'T KNOW WHOSE HEADS SHE PLANS ON CUTTING OFF, BUT...
WE WOULD SAVE A LOT OF TROUBLE BY LETTING HER DO WHATEVER SHE WANTS. DON'T YOU AGREE, COMRADE SERGEANT?
HOW CERTAIN OF THAT ARE YOU?
THE HEAD OF THE LOVELACE FAMILY DIED IN A TERRORIST BOMB ATTACK AT A POLITICAL PARTY CEREMONY IN BARINAS, VENEZUELA ON SEPTEMBER 12 OF THIS YEAR.
THAT IS INFORMATION THAT CAN BE TRUSTED, CAPTAIN.
...TERRORIST ...
...BOMBING ...
...YES, I DO SEE... SERGEANT.
THE DAY BEFORE MIDNIGHT
STEPHEN HUNTER

WHAT'S YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS INVOLVED HERE?
I WANT YOUR OPINION.
LOCAL ARMED GROUPS HAD NO MOTIVE. GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WOULD NOT HAVE CONCEALED THEM HERE.
IN MY PERSONAL OPINION...
THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY IT WAS A COVERT OPERATION BY A THIRD PARTY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.
WELL DONE, SERGEANT.
THE INSTRUCTORS AT THE RYAZAN AIRBORNE ACADEMY WOULD BE PROUD.
IF THE SCENARIO YOU ENVISION IS IN FACT TRUE...
...THAT'S A GOOD ENOUGH REASON FOR CHANG TO BE FRIGHTENED.
VERY INTERESTING.
THIS SHOULD BE FUN, EH, SERGEANT?


PUFF
YOU'RE SURE ABOUT...
...THE SOURCE?
IT'S A STATEMENT FROM SOMEBODY CONNECTED DIRECTLY TO THE LOVELACE FAMILY.
I BELIEVE HIS BACKGROUND CHECKS OUT.
I SEE...
I SEE...
AND SO WHAT'S YOUR BOSS SAYING?
WHETHER WE BITE OR NOT DEPENDS ON THAT.

Chapter 53: El Baile de la Muerte – Part X

ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION I'VE RECEIVED SO FAR, IT WAS CLEARLY AN ARBITRARY ACT BY THE DOD.
DEPENDING ON WHAT THEY DO, I BELIEVE IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO UTILIZE YOUR CHURCH'S INFORMATION NETWORK.
I'VE GOT AN INQUIRY IN WITH THE HEAD OFFICE, BUT...
IF IT WAS AN OPERATION WITH AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY APPROVAL, WE WOULD'VE HEARD ABOUT IT.

HMPH.
SO IT'S A TURF WAR BETWEEN THE NSA AND THE CIA.
THE BIGGER YOU ARE, THE MORE PROBLEMS YOU HAVE.
PLAN 117, THE SABOTAGE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN VENEZUELA, WHICH SPARKED THIS WHOLE THING...
...WAS PROPOSED AND EXECUTED WITHOUT OUR INVOLVEMENT.
THEY WAITED UNTIL WE, THE CIA, HAD SHIFTED TO AN ECONOMIC INFORMATION STRATEGY TO...
...EXPAND THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE FIELD OF COVERT OPERATIONS.
JUST THINKING ABOUT IT...
...MAKES ME SICK.
...
HMPH.
YOU DON'T MINCE YOUR WORDS, DO YOU, EDA?
OF COURSE NOT.
YOU CAN CONSIDER THAT OUR COLLECTIVE OPINION.

OH WELL.
I'LL KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANY INFO REGARDING THE NSA CHIEF HERE IN THE CITY.
THE CIA'S SOMETHING OF A REGULAR CUSTOMER.
IT'D BE GREAT FOR US IF WE CAN CONTINUE SHARING INFORMATION.
HE'S CURRENTLY THE DEPUTY CHIEF BACK AT HEAD-QUARTERS.
SINCE ROANAPUR IS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN BUREAU, HE'S STILL MY IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR.
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR. I HOPE WE CAN CONTINUE OUR RELATIONSHIP.
AH.
MR. LEVENCROFT ...
IS HE STILL YOUR BOSS?
THANK YOU, SISTER YOLANDA.
MY POSITION HERE AT THE CHURCH ALLOWS ME TO WORK WITH EASE.
MY SUPERIOR WILL CONTACT YOU SHORTLY REGARDING YOUR FEES.
LET'S GET BACK TO THE SUBJECT.
THE TRIAD'S TAKING THE LEAD IN THIS MATTER.
THEY'RE PROBABLY HOLDING A MEETING AT THE GOLDEN SWINGIN NIGHT CLUB RIGHT ABOUT NOW. DO YOU WANT A LIST OF WHO'S ATTENDING?
A RECORDING OR COPY OF THE MINUTES SHOULD DO.
I WOULD LIKE THAT.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT SO THERE WON'T BE ANY LEAKS.

THEY'LL SNEAK UP ON YOU AND SHOOT YOU IN THE BACK, SAME AS YOU WOULD.
BE CAREFUL.
YOU'RE UP AGAINST PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE TERRITORY.
SOME ADVICE FROM AN OLD LADY.
REMEMBER THAT, EDA.
YEAH.
SISTER.

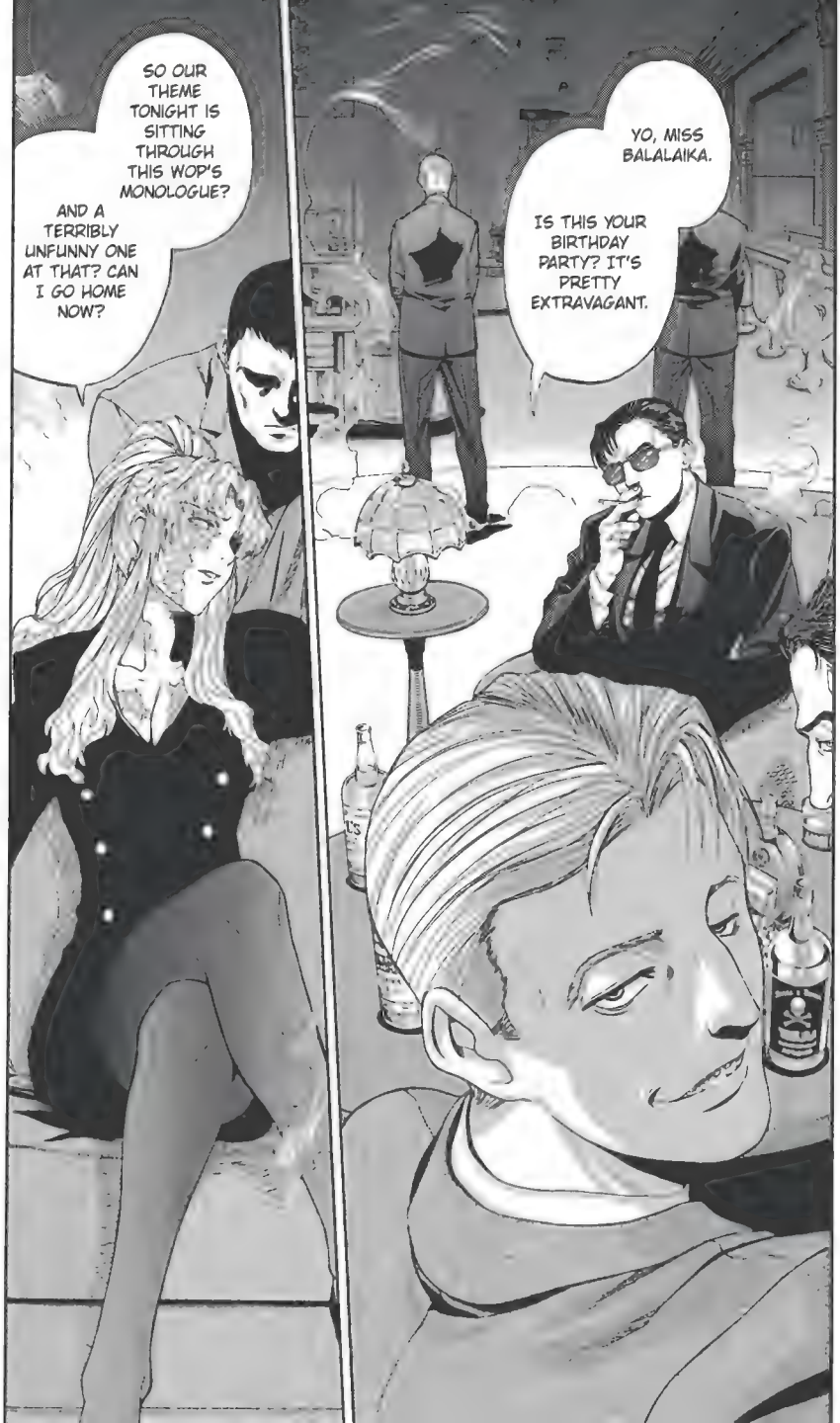
DID YOU GET A LOAD OF THAT BOATHOUSE?
NOT SO MUCH THE YOUNG MASTER, BUT THE LITTLE MAID WAS ECSTATIC.
WHAT'S WITH THE LONG FACE, ROCK?
BEING CALLED A MOLESTER GET TO YOU THAT MUCH?
YEAH.
SHE SEEMED TO LIKE THE POOL A LOT.
I WAS TRYING TO HELP HER.
I THOUGHT MAYBE SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SWIM.
BUT GETTING ALL EXCITED AND FALLING HEADFIRST INTO IT WAS KINDA LAME.
I'M DRENCHED HEAD TO TOE THANKS TO HER. YOU CAN'T BLAME ME FOR COMPLAINING A LITTLE...
VRRRG

VRRR
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
TO THE NETWORK MEETING...
...ABOUT THAT THING WE'RE ALSO INVOLVED WITH.
WHHMM
...THAT THE MAFIA?
WHERE ARE THEY ALL GOING?
JUST LIKE MR. CHANG SAID, THE PROBLEM DOESN'T END WITH HER.
THE MAID, THE PEOPLE SHE'S UP AGAINST, HER OBJECTIVE, METHODS, IT'S ALL PART OF THE PROBLEM.
GOES TO SHOW HOW NERVOUS THEY ARE.
NETWORK MEETING? BUT THERE'S SO MANY OF THEM-
VRRR
TODAY'S MEETING'LL DECIDE HER FATE...
...REGARDLESS OF WHAT GARCIA WANTS OR DOESN'T WANT.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT.

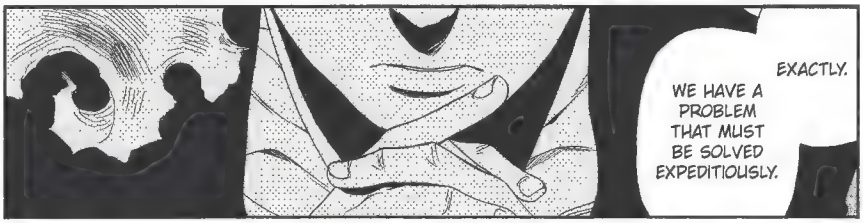
I HATE TO SAY THIS, ROCK.
FLK
BUT THE WATER'S FLOWING...
...AROUND OUR FEET. THE YOUNG MASTER'S TOO. THAT'S THE SITUATION.
YOU HEARD WHAT DUTCH SAID?
"YOU GOTTA DISTINGUISH THE DIVIDE."
VROOM
IT'S THE SMART WAY TO PLAY IT. THE RIGHT WAY.
...YEAH.
THAT'S RIGHT. BUT...
THE DIVIDE IS FARTHER DOWN.
AND YOU CAN ONLY SEE IT AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT.

WELCOME, MISS BALALAIKA.
PLEASE EXCUSE THE SEARCH.

THE GOLDEN SWINGIN NIGHT CLUB
THANK YOU.
GO AHEAD MA'AM, THEY'RE ALL WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE.
CHINK
WE'LL HOLD YOUR WEAPONS HERE FOR YOU.
BEEEEP


SO OUR THEME TONIGHT IS SITTING THROUGH THIS WOP'S MONOLOGUE?
AND A TERRIBLY UNFUNNY ONE AT THAT? CAN I GO HOME NOW?
YO, MISS BALALAIKA.
IS THIS YOUR BIRTHDAY PARTY? IT'S PRETTY EXTRAVAGANT.

SOUNDS LIKE THE VODKA'S GOT YOU SHITFACED ALREADY.
MAYBE I OUGHTA SMACK YOU AROUND A BIT?
OOH, YOU'RE SCARING ME.
CUT IT OUT, TOMASO.
THIS LADY'S A COUNTRY BUMPKIN. SHE DON'T KNOW WHAT MANNERS ARE.
YOU SOUND A LOT LIKE THIS AMATEUR COMEDIAN OVER HERE.
HEY, AMIGO.
I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR FLIRTING SESSION, BUT I'M BUSY. LET'S GET THIS MEETING STARTED.


EXACTLY.
WE HAVE A PROBLEM THAT MUST BE SOLVED EXPEDITIOUSLY.

I'M SURE SOME OF YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE, BUT...
...I'VE ASKED YOU ALL HERE FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN...
...TO FOLLOW UP ON THE MAID WHO STIRRED THINGS UP HERE A WHILE BACK.

I'LL MAKE IT SIMPLE.
HER OBJECTIVE IS REVENGE.
HER TRUSTED EMPLOYER AND MASTER WAS ASSASSINATED.
HER ENEMIES ARE HERE IN TOWN AND SHE PLANS ON TAKING THEM OUT.
SKULL &
TEQ
IMPO
MEX
SINCE WHEN DID THE CUPOLA START A COMEDY TOUR?
MAYBE YOU SHOULD'VE SET BOB SAGET UP AS YOUR BOSS?
YOU SEEM TO KNOW A LOT FOR A RUSSKIE HICK. BUT I'D GO WITH WILL FERRELL.
THAT'S NOT A BAD PLAN, RONNY.
YOU HEADLINE WITH THAT ROUTINE AND IT'LL BE NEAR PERFECT.
AHA!
YEAH, THAT'S PRETTY SIMPLE, SIR.
SNAP!
WE'LL HOST A RECONCILIATION PARTY FOR THEM.
BREAK OUT SOME CHAMPAGNE AND BAKE 'EM A HUGE CAKE. AND ON IT...
WE'LL WRITE, "WE'RE ALL ONE HAPPY FAMILY."
THROW IN SOME TITTY DANCERS AND THEY'LL EVEN BECOME PENPALS.

I HEARD IT WAS A STATUS SYMBOL TO EAT AT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT IN YOUR COUNTRY.
EVEN PEOPLE LIVING IN TRAILERS EAT BETTER THAN THAT WHERE I'M FROM.
YOU LIKE FRUGALITY? OR DO YOU PUT...
...A SLICE OF A WHOLE COW BETWEEN BREAD THE SIZE OF A SUITCASE TO GET YOUR MONEY'S WORTH?
...I SEE.
YOU'RE WAY BETTER THAN VERROCHIO WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING ON MY NERVES.
YOU MIGHT EVEN LIVE A LITTLE LONGER IF YOU CAN WALK IT LIKE YOU TALK IT.
YOU STINKIN' RUSSIAN BITCH.
I CAN SHOW YOU IF YOU WANT.
SHP
WHSHH
AAA

ARE WE GOING TO BREAK THIS UP AND KILL EACH OTHER BEFORE WE EVEN GET TO THE AGENDA?
I CAN IMAGINE THE PARTY OVER AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IF WE DID.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, KNOCK YOURSELVES OUT.
THEY'RE SOLDIERS.
AND NOT JUST ANY SOLDIERS. THEY'RE SPECIAL FORCES SOLDIERS TRAINED IN UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE.
AND IF I MAY STATE ONE MORE TROUBLING FACT...
...THEY'RE HIDING IN TOWN UNDER ORDERS FROM HIGHER UP IN THE GOVERNMENT.
...LET'S CONTINUE.
THE TERRORISTS WHO BOMBED AND KILLED HER MASTER...
KRUNCH
KTINK

WHAT THEY'RE HERE FOR...
...AND WHAT THEY WANT, IS STILL IN THE DARK.
...MR. ABREGO.
IT WAS YOUR PEOPLE WHO FIRST MOVED ON THIS MATTER.
I'M HOPING YOU COLOMBIANS KNOW...
...MORE THAN I DO.

HEY, MR. CHICANO.
NOBODY HERE LIKES SECRETS.
SPEAK ENGLISH.

¿QUÉ HACEMOS? DEBERÍAMOS LLAMAR AL JEFE Y...
YA SÉ, COÑO. MANTENTE CALLADO, GUSTAVO.

...WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BOMBING.
SAME WITH THE GRINGO SOLDIERS. WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THAT.
WE MOVED OUR MEN UNDER ORDERS FROM BACK HOME.
KTOK
GULP!
THEIR BOSS PASTURIA'S STANDING ORDER IS TO KILL HER ON SIGHT.
FARC
THAT MAID IS STILL FARC'S NUMBER ONE MOST WANTED. WE NEEDED HER DEAD FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM TO RUN SMOOTHLY.
THE FARC SWITCHED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO OUR ORGANIZATION FROM THE MEDELLÍN CARTEL THEY TOOK DOWN.
WE COULDN'T MOVE UNTIL SHE MOVED ON HER OWN.
THE MANSION WAS UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE BY THE LOCAL COPS AND PARATROOPERS.
THEY COULD'VE TAKEN HER OUT ANY TIME THEY WANTED.
THERE WAS NO REASON TO DO SO UNTIL THIS TOWN WAS DRAGGED IN.
THEY KNEW WHERE SHE WAS—THE LOVELACE FARM IN VENEZUELA.
IF THAT'S SO, HE WAS PRETTY SHARP.
NO.
REACHING OUT TO THE MVR ALSO COULD'VE BEEN PART OF HIS PLANS TO HIDE THE MAID.
SO THE MASTER WASN'T THAT STUPID.

SHE'S WANTED BY OUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATES.
AS LONG AS SHE'S ALIVE, NOBODY BACK HOME CAN SLEEP IN PEACE.
WE RESPECT THE WAY YOU DO THINGS HERE...
BUT NOT THIS TIME.
POFF
WE HAVE ORDERS FROM OUR JEFE TO PICKLE HER HEAD AND BRING IT BACK TO BUCARAMANGA.
THAT'S AN ORDER OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY. YOU UNDERSTAND? THE HIGHEST.
...SEÑOR CHANG.
LET ME MAKE ONE THING CLEAR.
CHF
NO MATTER WHAT COMES OF IT, WE WILL HUNT THAT MAID DOWN.
NOBODY'S GONNA GET IN OUR WAY, AND IF YOU DO, WE WON'T HOLD BACK.
THAT'S ALL WE WANTED TO SAY, SEÑOR.
I DON'T SEE A PROBLEM WITH THAT, CHANG.
I THOUGHT THEY WERE A BUNCH OF COWARDS, BUT THEY ACTUALLY DO HAVE SOME BALLS.
...HAH.
HAH HAH HAH HAH...

WE DON'T HAVE ANY FAVORS TO SELL TO YOU, NOR DO WE WANT TO BUY ANY OBLIGATIONS EITHER.
YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO THE MAID.
WE DON'T CARE ONE BIT.
THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO. I DON'T NEED YOU TO TELL ME THAT.
AS LONG AS THERE'S NO INTERFERENCE.
THAT'S ALWAYS THE CASE WITH BARBARIANS.
IF THAT'S THE DECISION OF THIS MEETING, AT LEAST PUT A BOUNTY ON HER HEAD.
US CIVILIZED PEOPLE DON'T KILL IF IT DOESN'T INVOLVE MONEY.
YOU DAGO PIG.
IF YOU DON'T LIKE PAIN, GO BACK TO YOUR DRESSING ROOM AND WORK ON YOUR COMEDY ROUTINE.
OUR ENEMY ISN'T THE MAID, IT'S WHO SHE'S AFTER.
CHANG.
YOU SAY THEIR OBJECTIVE IS UNKNOWN?
THEIR INTENTIONS HERE ARE OBVIOUS.
AN ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN THAT'LL SEND THE JUNKIES INTO A FIT OR...
...CAPTURE OR ASSASSINATE SOMEBODY IN ONE OF THE SYNDICATES HERE.
EITHER WAY, THERE'S NOTHING TO GAIN BY BEING ON THE DEFENSIVE.

THE BEST STRATEGY IS TO PROMPTLY...
...WIPE THEM OUT BEFORE THEY CAN CARRY OUT THEIR PLAN.
YOU MEAN GO UP AGAINST THE SPECIAL FORCES?
GUYS WITH UNITED STATES DOGTAGS HANGING AROUND THEIR NECKS?
YOU'RE CRAZY. IT'S AN ALCOHOLIC'S FANTASY.
MAYBE THE VODKA'S WEARING OFF AND YOUR HANDS ARE STARTING TO SHAKE.
THIS IS A PROBLEM THAT ORGANIZATIONS WITH INTERESTS IN THIS TOWN HAVE TO DEAL WITH.
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PETTY CROOKS LIKE YOU GUYS. GO BACK TO SICILY AND CHASE A SHEEP'S ASS, YOU GUTLESS WOP.
I KNOW YOU DON'T REALLY MEAN THAT, YOU GODDAMNED COMMIE.
YOU JUST WANNA GET BACK AT THE AMERICANS. I'M SAYING THAT'S A NUISANCE.
HEY HEY HEY. CUT IT OUT.
WE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.
WE DON'T WANT ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE AMERICANS.
WE DON'T WANNA END UP LIKE PABLO ESCOBAR.
CHANG.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YOU WANNA HUNT DOWN THE OUTSIDERS LIKE THESE TWO WANT?
OR—

DRAGON LACE
IT'S BEEN 35 YEARS...
...SINCE THIS ROTTEN HARBOR TOWN BECAME A DEN OF VICE.
ROANAPUR HAS MANAGED TO STAY OUT OF CNN'S EVENING NEWS OR THE DINNER TOPIC OF HOUSEWIVES ONLY BECAUSE...
...FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT, THE MOTIVES OF THOSE WHO'VE GATHERED HERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN...CONSISTENT.
THAT IS...
...IT'S IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST...
...TO LEAD THE PUBLIC EYE AWAY FROM OUR MORE STIMULATING BUSINESSES...
...FOR THE PEACE OF MIND OF THOSE WHO ARE CROOKED.

WE MAKE THE LAWS. WE ARE THE RULERS HERE.
A MODERN DAY LIBERTALIA. A TAINTED "ELSEWHERE."
BLESSED WITH TIRELESS HARD WORK AND A LITTLE BIT OF GOOD FORTUNE, THIS BACKWATER TOWN...
THIS ENTIRE TOWN, HAS TRANSFORMED INTO OUR HIDE-OUT.
YOU CAN TALK ABOUT MYANMAR'S ANGLO TOWN.
OR PERHAPS EL REY.
WE'RE MORE CLOSED OFF, MORE VULGAR, AND MORE EXCITING THAN ANY OF THOSE PLACES.
A PLACE FILLED WITH THE ENERGY OF A MOONLESS NIGHT
OR MAYBE JOHANNES-BURG.

THAT IS THIS TOWN.
THAT IS ROANAPUR!
BUT IT'S DELICATE AND FRAGILE.
ONCE WE ALLOW THE LIGHT TO SHINE IN, THERE IS NOBODY TO PROTECT US.
WE SHOULD AVOID A HEAD-TO-HEAD CLASH WITH THEM UNTIL THE VERY LAST MOMENT. THAT IS WHAT I BELIEVE.
ALLOW ME TO STATE THE POSITION OF THE TRIAD.

IT IS BECAUSE WE'VE OVERCOME PROBLEMS AND HELPED EACH OTHER...
...THAT WE HAVE THIS PROSPERITY.
IF YOU ARE WILLING TO ABANDON ALL OF THAT AND INSIST ON CHARGING AHEAD...
...THAT'S FINE. BUT...
I ASK YOU TO RESTRAIN YOURSELVES IN REGARDS TO U.S. GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL.
AND OF COURSE...
...THAT MAID, WHO COULD POSSIBLY BECOME A LAND MINE.
THE TRIAD ACTS WITH THE SURVIVAL OF THIS TOWN IN MIND.
UNTIL IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT THEIR PURPOSE IS TO MEDDLE WITH LOCAL AFFAIRS...

PLEASE REMEMBER THIS.
IF WE CONTINUE SUSPECTING EACH OTHER, CONTINUE PURSUING OUR OWN SELF-INTERESTS ...
WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE LEFT STANDING IN THE RING AT THE END?
ZFFF
...THERE WON'T BE ANYBODY THERE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.
NOT YOU, NOT ME...
...NOT EVEN THE RING ITSELF.

SHA O A AA
HOTEL
EL SEÑOR CONOCE MIS DEBILIDADES.
(THE LORD KNOWS MY WEAKNESSES.)
PORQUE NADA ES POSIBLE SIN LA GRACIA DE DIOS, TE PIDO SEÑOR QUE LOS CONSIGNES COMO CONSIDERES NECESARIO.
(BECAUSE NOTHING IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT HIS GRACE, I ASK YOU LORD TO MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR WILL.)
PERMITE A ESTE DISCÍPULO EVITAR LOS PECADO ENVIADOS.
(ALLOW YOUR DISCIPLE TO AVOID EVIL.)
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Part XI

...POR TU DIVINA GRACIA.
(...THROUGH YOUR DIVINE GRACE.)
YOU DON'T LOOK WELL.
YOU SHOULD STOP TAKING THOSE PILLS. YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY OVER-MEDICATING YOURSELF.
Y LLEVAR A CABO, CON RECTITUD DE LOS DESIGNIOS DE TUS PALABRAS...
(AND CARRY OUT, WITH HONOR, YOUR DIVINE PLAN...)
Y DÓTAME DE FUERZA PARA QUE PUEDA ACOGER Y SOBREPONERME...
(PROVIDE ME WITH THE STRENGTH TO ACCEPT AND OVERCOME...)
A LOS RETOS QUE ME IMPONES...
(...THE CHALLENGES YOU IMPOSE...)

DON'T YOU...
...HAVE ANY INTENTION OF GOING BACK TO THAT MANSION?
THAT BOY MUST BE WAITING FOR YOU...
...AT THE *HACIENDA* WHERE THE ORCHIDS ARE BLOOMING.
HE LOVES YOU.
AND YOU LOVE HIM.
YOU LOVE EACH OTHER LIKE FAMILY.
WHY DON'T YOU HOLD ON TO THAT?

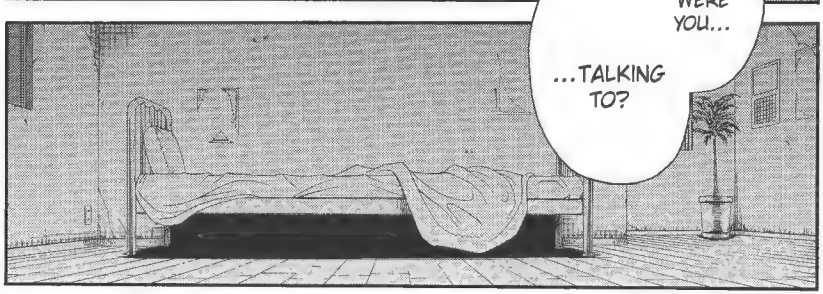
REVENGE IS MERELY A MOTIVE.
WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO...
WHERE YOU ARE LOOKING NOW...
...IS SOMEWHERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, NO?
IS IT REALLY REVENGE?
...
MY SINS ARE MY OWN...
THE MASTER, AND...THE YOUNG MASTER...SHOULD HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY HEAVEN... THAT'S WHY...!

RESPONSIBILITY?
...NO.
PERHAPS IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO CALL IT ATONEMENT.
BUT...
IF A RESPONSIBILITY EXISTS THAT YOU MUST BEAR...
...THERE WILL BE NO ATONEMENT NO MATTER WHAT.
NOT REVENGE NOR PRAYER NOR FORGIVENESS ...
NOT EVEN DEATH.
KLTR
KTNK
KKLNK
KLNK
CONTINUING ON THIS PATH...
...WILL ONLY LEAD YOU TO ANOTHER HELL.
TATTLE
TATTLE
TATTLE

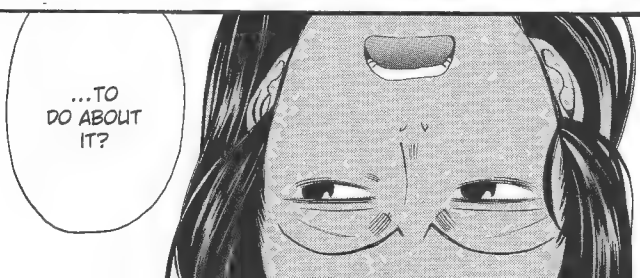
TK TK
KL TK
I KNOW YOU UNDER-STAND...
...WHAT IS BEST, WHAT ACTIONS ARE TRULY NECESSARY AT THIS MOMENT.
THAT IS-
SHUT UP.
KA CHA
A TIME WHEN...
...ABOUT TO RETURN TO WHAT YOU ONCE WERE.
DO YOU REALIZE THAT, ROSARITA?
...
YOU ARE...
DRIP
DRIP
...THE FIRE OF REVOLU-TION WAS IN YOU.

CH
WAAAAA!!
WHOA WHOA WHOA! WAIT WAIT WAIT!
DON'T SHOOT! IT'S ME! IT'S LEROY!
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?!
IF YOU WANNA DANCE WITH THE SPICS WITHOUT AN ESCORT, GO RIGHT–
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
ALL I NEED IS–
YOU WANNA SHOOT ME?! FINE! GO AHEAD! SHIT!

I GOT YOUR CLOTHES RIGHT HERE. BASICALLY EVERYTHING YOU ASKED FOR.
AND...
I MADE A DEAL—IT'S DOWN TO MONEY NOW.
YOU CAN GIVE ME A THANK-YOU KISS AS A MATTER OF FACT. BY THE WAY...


WHO WERE YOU...
...TALKING TO?

THM
THM
THM
SO?


WHADDAYA WANT ME...
...TO DO ABOUT IT?

FOR STARTERS...
...DUTCH AND I TOLD YOU NOT TO, BUT YOU WENT OUT THERE THINKING YOU WERE HOT SHIT.
AND NOW YOU COME BACK AND TELL ME YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE?
...
WELL...
YEAH.
"YEAH"?
I AIN'T NO JUVY COP OR SOME KINDA SOCIAL WORKER.
SO DON'T GIVE ME THAT SHIT.
I TRIED ASKING AROUND, BUT...
TNK
KRK
EVERYONE BACKED OFF ONCE IT WASN'T ABOUT BUSINESS. I DIDN'T GET ANYWHERE.
OF COURSE NOT.
KRK
NOBODY WANTS THEIR TUMMY CHECKED WHEN IT DON'T HURT.

...ROCK.
WHEN A CHILD'S IN TROUBLE, YOU HELP, RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW HOW IT IS IN THIS TOWN, BUT THAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT THAT KID?
...
THAT'S A TEXTBOOK ANSWER. BUT...
...THAT'S TOO EASY. I DON'T BUY IT.
KR
K
LISTEN.
WHAT I'M ASKING YOU IS...
TNK
WHAT'RE YOU HOPING TO GAIN AT THE END OF ALL THIS?

WHP
YOU'RE GONNA GIVE ME A TEXTBOOK ANSWER AND THEN GET PHILOSOPHICAL ON ME?
THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS BACK WHERE YOU'RE FROM TOO.
LIKE IT OR NOT, THIS IS HOW THE WORLD WORKS. LISTEN, ROCK...
WHEN THE SCALE TIPS A CERTAIN WAY, THINGS MAY NOT GO THE WAY YOU WANT THEM MOST OF THE TIME...
GAIN, HUH?
THAT'S ALL ANYONE IN THIS TOWN THINKS ABOUT.
BUT IF YOU CAN PROFIT, YOU DON'T CARE HOW THE SCALE TIPS.
YOU FOLLOWING ME?
THAT'S WHAT A FOOL WOULD SAY.
BUT WHAT ABOUT IN REAL LIFE?
AND...
THE OPPOSITE TOO.
YOU GO TOO CHEAP, AND THEY'LL BE SUSPICIOUS.
KRK
IDIOTS LIKE THAT USUALLY MISJUDGE WHEN TO BACK OUT.
THAT'S HOW YOU EITHER GET LOCKED UP...
OR WIND UP IN A FREEZER AT THE MORGUE A FEW POUNDS HEAVIER FROM ALL THE LEAD PUMPED INTO YOU.
HMF!
KRK

WHAT'S YOUR...
...TAKE?
ROCK.
...
A REWARD FROM GARCIA...
POCKET MONEY FROM MR. CHANG, AND...
...SELF-SATISFACTION.
THMP.
...SELF-SATISFACTION.
I THINK YOU'RE...
...ABOUT TO PULL A REPEAT OF LAST TIME.
WHEN WE...
SHIF

...WERE IN JAPAN.
WHEN YOU TRIED TO SAVE THE "TOP OYABUN" SCHOOLGIRL.
YOU...
THAT'S NOT-
YES, IT IS.
SKWK
SKWK
SWP
...DO YOU EVER CONSIDER ME?
...HAVE A TENDENCY TO JUMP INTO A FIREFIGHT WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES.
...ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE DETERMINED TO GO THROUGH WITH SOMETHING.
WHO FOLLOWS YOU IN THERE?

...YOU'RE THERE FOR ME WHEN I NEED YOU THE MOST.
I'M GRATEFUL FOR THAT.
HMPH.
GRATE-FUL, HUH?
IT'S TRUE.
I KNOW.
WE'RE WAY PAST NEEDING TO PATCH UP THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH LIES.
SO...
WHAT DO YOU THINK...
...ABOUT ALL THIS?

I'M SAYING WE NEED...
...SOME KIND OF *RITUAL* BEFORE I FOLLOW YOU INTO A FIREFIGHT.
I AIN'T YOUR NANNY OR YOUR PAROLE OFFICER.
I'M...
...ASKING YOU...
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO LIVE WITH WHAT YOU DO?
I'M THROUGH WITH...
...JUST GOING WITH THE FLOW.

KKRK
...
FLAP
FLAP
WHEN WE WERE IN JAPAN...
YOU SAID YOU WERE A GUN.
DRIP

IF YOU'RE THE GUN...
I'M THE BULLET.

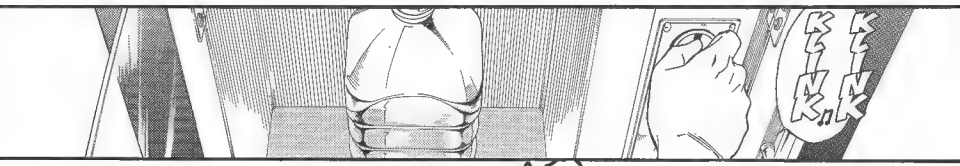
PLOH
A BULLET IS JUST A PIECE OF LEAD.
BUT...
WHEN THE HAMMER FALLS...
...THAT HUNK OF LEAD HAS THE POWER TO BLOW AWAY ANYTHING.
IF I HAD...
...NEVER MET YOU, I WOULD'VE SPENT THE REST OF MY LIFE JUST BEING PIECE OF LEAD.
BUT...
WE DID MEET.
A BULLET... IS ALWAYS WAITING TO GO OFF.
AND THE ONLY THING THAT CAN FIRE A BULLET IS...
A GUN.

...“LIGHT MY FIRE.”
WHAT?
IT’S AN OLD DOORS SONG. DON’T YOU KNOW IT?
...ROCK.
WHAT KIND OF BULLET ARE YOU?
FULL METAL JACKET?
A HOLLOW-POINT?
OR A GLASER SAFETY SLUG?
NONE OF THOSE.
YOU’RE A SILVER BULLET THAT DOESN’T KNOW WHERE IT’S GOING.
KTNK
ONE THAT CAN EVEN KILL AN INVINCIBLE MONSTER.
AN EXPENSIVE UNSTOPPABLE BULLET.
CHNKK
BUT...
USE IT AT THE WRONG MOMENT, IT’S ALL OVER. THE MONSTER EATS YOU.
WHAT YOU SAID MAKES ME WONDER...
WILL YOU STILL USE IT? IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME TO PULL THE TRIGGER?
THAT’S WHAT IT MAKES ME THINK, ROCK.

...
WE'RE OUT OF WATER.
...I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
THAT'S WHY...
...FROM HERE ON OUT, IT'S YOUR CHOICE.

GOTCHA.
HEY!
IT TAKES BAHT. DON'T USE NICKELS. YOU'LL BREAK IT.
KTHMP
KTMP
KTMP
ROCK.
THERE'S A VENDING MACHINE NEXT TO THE DOWNSTAIRS ENTRANCE. YOU WANNA GO BUY SOME?
FLSH
WHA-?
SURE.

...
...THAT BASTARD...
GOD DAMN IT...

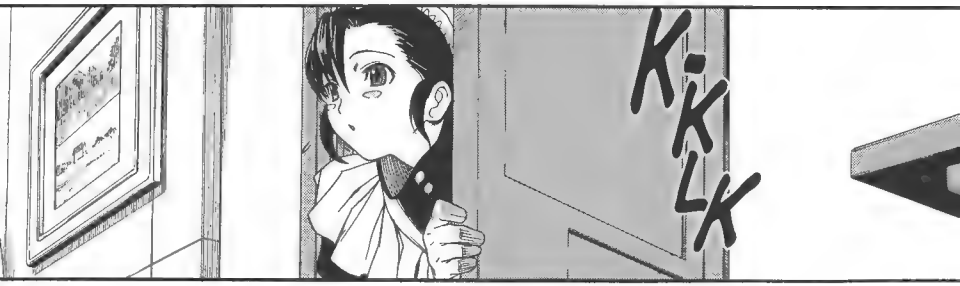

KNK
KNK
KNK...

TMP
TMP
HEY?
REVY?
I WAS GONNA BRING UP THE-

TNK
CHK

FLIK
THE OLD MAN AT PRAIYACHAT...
...SHOULD BE UP AND AROUND BY NOW.
SWIP
WE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE BOAT BY EVENING.
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH, ROCK.

Chapter 55: El Baile de la Muerte - Part XII



YOUNG MASTER...?
ARE YOU SLEEPING?
ZZZ
ZZZ
...
I GUESS SO...
OOOOO
...GOOD!

シピ
ハシ

HAAA...
IT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL POOL.
I DESERVE THIS ONCE IN A WHILE...
YOU SNEAKY LITTLE BITCH. WHEN DIDJA BUY A BATHING SUIT?
AND...
...A FLOAT AND BEACH SANDALS TOO, HUH? YOU CAME PREPARED.
I-I...
I JUST HAPPENED TO FIND A STORE DURING OUR SEARCH...
WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH YOU ANYWAY?!
FLASH
WELL, HELLO TO YOU TOO.
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S GOT NUTHIN' TO DO WITH ME.
YOU'RE IN AN AWFULLY GOOD MOOD.
HAPPY NOW, YOU LITTLE SHIT?

ZO
WHAT?!
BUT WHAT ABOUT HIM?
NG
GET OUTTA THERE.
WE'RE LEAVING. WE AIN'T GOT MUCH TIME.
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
...
...
WHEN DID YOU BUY A BATHING SUIT...?
OH YEAH...?
YOU GOT SO EXCITED YOU FELL IN?
EXCUSE ME!
VENEZUELA IS NOT AN UNDEVELOPED COUNTRY!
IT'S RARE TO SEE SOMEONE GET EXCITED OVER A POOL THESE DAYS.
YOU GOT NO POOLS WHERE YOU COME FROM?

I JUST PERSONALLY HAVEN'T BEEN IN A POOL BEFORE!
WE HAVE A MAGNIFICENT FOUNTAIN AT THE MANOR, BUT...
...MY SANITY WOULD BE QUESTIONED IF I SWAM IN THAT.
...
...YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KEEP IT A SECRET FROM ME.
DO I LOOK LIKE A TYRANT WHO WOULDN'T EVEN ALLOW THAT?
...I'M SORRY, YOUNG MASTER.
YO, YOUNG MASTER.
YOU'RE HER BOSS.
WHEN THE BOSS IS ACTING LIKE THAT...
YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY...
WHILE YOU WERE OUT RUNNING AROUND LOOKING FOR FOUR EYES ALL DAY...
...YOUR SERVANT HERE'S BEEN WATCHING YOUR EVERY MOVE!
...HOW COULD SHE SAY SHE WANTS TO RELAX?
BUT IT JUST GOES TO SHOW HOW LOYAL SHE IS TO YOU.
AND YOU COULDN'T EVEN SENSE THAT MUCH? YOU IDIOT.

PINCH
I WILL NOT PERMIT YOU...
...TO SPEAK TO THE YOUNG MASTER LIKE THAT!
ZMP
ZMP
ZMP
F- FABIOLA...!
OWW! CUT IT OUT, TWERP!! AIIIEE!
...
SHE'S RIGHT.
I AM IN A RUSH. BUT...
YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE WITH ME. I SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED YOU AS WELL...
GATA
IT'S NATURAL TO FEEL RUSHED, YOUNG MASTER.
I'VE BEEN INCONSIDERATE OF MY POSITION.
I AM SORRY.
...GARCIA.
WITH REVY HERE, WE'RE ALL SET.
ROBERTA SHOULD BE WITHIN YOUR REACH SOON.

WE'VE GOT THOSE SHE'S TRYING TO TAKE OUT, THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO TAKE HER OUT, AND THOSE TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER.
WE HAVE TO UNTANGLE THEM AND PUT THEM ALL WHERE THEY BELONG.
BUT...
THE HARD PART IS GOING TO BE CAPTURING HER.
IT'S...
...A GAMBLE.
...BUT IT'S ALSO...
...WHAT MAKES ALL THIS...
...SO INTERESTING.

YOU HERE, OLD MAN?
IT'S REVY, FROM LAGOON TRADERS.
BZZT
WHO THE HELL IS IT?
IT'S TOO FRIGGIN' EARLY-
SH
K
K
I

OH IT'S YOU, REVY!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE. HOW'S THE CUTLASS?
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE SMOOTHNESS OF THE SLIDE.
IT COULDN'T BE BETTER.
BUT I FEEL LIKE IT'S GETTING KINDA LOOSE AROUND THE SEAR RECENTLY.
HMM?
LET'S NOT STAND AROUND HERE. COME IN TO THE WORKSHOP AND I'LL TAKE A LOOK AT IT.
OH, ESTO ES SORPRENDENTE!
ACTUALLY, POPS...
I CAME HERE FOR SOMETHING ELSE.
SOMETHING ELSE?
YOU NEED ME TO BUILD YOU SOMETHING AGAIN?

...
ANOTHER ONE?
SO SHE WAS HERE.
A TALLER VERSION OF SHORT STUFF HERE, WITH GLASSES, RIGHT?
WANT ME TO ARM HER UP TOO?
KACHIK
TROUBLE?
NO.
NOT YET ANYWAY.
SHE WAS BAO'S REFERRAL.
SHE WAS A FIRST-TIMER, BUT I LET HER IN.
SH-CHAK
WHAT'D SHE COME HERE FOR?
GUNS?
WE'RE NOT THE RIP-OFF CHURCH. I'M A GUNSMITH AND IT'S JUST A HOBBY.
SHE ALREADY HAD HER OWN PIECE.

IT WAS AN ANTIQUE. A FLINTLOCK RIFLE.
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, PRUSSIAN OR SPANISH.
SHE SAID SHE WANTED ME TO...
...RESTORE IT SO IT COULD BE USED AGAIN.
...I KNOW, FABIOLA.
IT WAS THE GUN ON DISPLAY IN THE HALL.
...YOUNG MASTER!
KLIK
ALL IT NEEDED AFTER THAT WAS SOME CORDITE OR GUNPOWDER TO CHARGE IT...
...BUT THAT'S NOT MY EXPERTISE.
...BUT ANYWAY...
IT HAD BEEN KEPT SO WELL ALL I HAD TO DO WAS REPLACE THE LEAF SPRING AND CORRECT THE WARP OF THE FRIZZEN.
T-KLIK
...FOR THAT, YOU WANT "BLASTER" TOH CHI!
YEAH.
I FIGURED AS MUCH FROM THE GET-GO.

I MADE IT SO IT WOULD SHOOT, BUT–
HEY, REVY.
WHAT'S THIS? THE GRIPS ARE MISALIGNED.
YOU BANGED IT HARD, DIDN'T YOU?!
THE BUTT OF THE GUN'S...
...FOR CRACKING HEADS, ISN'T IT?
CHAK
YOU IDIOT. THIS IS ONE OF KIND.
TAKE BETTER CARE OF IT OR I WON'T MAKE ANY-THING ELSE FOR YOU.
...SHIT.
SORRY, POPS. I'M WORKING RIGHT NOW AND DON'T HAVE A BACK-UP. I'LL COME GET IT FIXED WHEN I'M DONE.
YO!
REVY!
WHAT'S THAT GIRL TRYING TO DO WITH THAT ANTIQUE?
ONE IS "PAYBACK."
AND THE OTHER IS "GOING POSTAL."
IF SHE COMES BY AGAIN, CALL US AT THE OFFICE.
LATER, POPS.

VROOO

...THIS TOH CHI'S PLACE?
GU UNK
WHAT A DUMP.
HE USED TO LIVE ON SARTNAM STREET A LITTLE WHILE AGO.
HE BOILED UP HIS DIAPERS PRETTY GOOD THANKS TO ALL THE JUNK HE WAS DOING, SO NOW HE'S HOLED UP IN HERE.
KTH UNK
ROCK.
HE'S PARANOID. THINGS COULD GET COMPLICATED IF WE GO UP THERE IN LARGE NUMBERS.
WAIT HERE WITH THE YOUNG MASTER. THE MAID AND I'LL GO.
C'MON, LOLITA.
LET'S GO.
OH...
YES!
UM...
TMP
TMP
TMP
QUIET.
...WHOA!
WHF!
?

JUST AS I THOUGHT.
HE'S MORE PARANOID THAN EVER.
LISTEN UP, MAID.
IF YOU DON'T WANNA BE RUNNING FOOTRACES ON A FAKE LEG...
AND...
...DON'T GO WANDERING AROUND IN HERE. YOU GOT THAT?
DON'T STEP ON THE FIRST BOARD PAST THE WIRE.
THERE'S A CASESHOT RIGGED UNDER IT.
TWITCH
...!
...HOW TERRIBLE!
DOES HE WANT TO KILL EVERY VISITOR?
KNOK
KNOK
YOU JUST REALIZED THAT? OF COURSE HE DOES.
DO ENOUGH SPEED AND SMACK AND EVERYONE ENDS UP LIKE THAT.
HEY! TOH!
OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR, TOH! IT'S REVY!
I CAN HEAR THE AIR CONDITIONER! DON'T ACT LIKE YOU'RE NOT IN THERE!
YOU BETTER OPEN THE DOOR OR I'M GONNA KICK IT DOWN, YOU FUCKER!!!
WHA
WHA
WHAM

KLIK
KLAK
KCHIK
KLAK
...
REVY? IS IT REALLY, REALLY YOU?
DO I LOOK LIKE SOMEBODY ELSE, YOU IDIOT.
NO, IT'S COOL
I JUST THOUGHT-?
YOU ARE SICK.
THIS TOWN'S REALLY FULL OF JEDI KNIGHTS.
SHE MUST BE AN ADVANCE GUARD OF THE MARS ATTACK CORPS!!
WAAA!
K-K
I THOUGHT I BLOCKED THE DEATH RAY WITH ALUMINUM FOIL!
WHO IS THAT?!
OKAY, FUCKER! I'LL TAKE YOU ON!!
S-S-S-SO YOU CAME TO FINISH ME OFF IN PERSON, DIDN'T YOU?!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
I'M SERIOUS.
HER SAUCER'S CALLED ADAM-SOME-THING. I SAW IT.
HUH?!
W-WAIT...!
WHOA, WHOA. RELAX.
SHE'S, UH...
ONE OF THE GOOD ALIENS.
PLAY ALONG, BABY.
YOU DON'T WANT A BLOODBATH EITHER, DO YA?
SST
SHE'S TELLING THE TRUTH!
I CAME ALL THE WAY FROM VENUS TO...UH... SAVE YOU FROM THE EVIL GRIP OF THE CYLON EMPIRE!!
P

AH...
YEAH.
YOU CANNOT BLOCK THEIR DEATH RAY WITH ALUMINUM FOIL!
WE ONLY MAKE CONTACT WITH A FEW CHOSEN WARRIORS!
I CAME TO TELL YOU ABOUT OUR NEW SUPER SPACE SECRET!
WITH IT YOU WILL BE SAFE!
YOU NO LONGER NEED TO FEAR THE CYLON EMPIRE OR THE ILLUMINATI WORLD GOVERNMENT WHO COLLABORATE WITH THEM!!!
THEREFORE, MAY WE PLEASE ENTER?!
A-ALL RIGHT.
C-C-COME IN!
WHO'RE THE CYLONS?
THE BAD GUYS I SAW IN A RERUN OF BATTLESTAR GALACTICA.
AND I MIXED IN SOME STUFF I READ IN THE TABLOIDS.
WELL ?!
WHAT'S THIS SUPER SPACE-
HOLD UP.
US FIRST.
YOU GET ANY...
...STRANGE ORDERS RECENTLY?
NOT FOR EXPLOSIVES WORK, BUT FOR MERCHANDISE.
...COME TO THINK OF IT.
SOME DUDE CAME HERE ABOUT FOUR DAYS AGO ASKING FOR SOME FLINTS AND GUNPOWDER.
SLUMP
DUDE?
IT WASN'T A WOMAN?

NAH.
I THINK HE SAID HE WAS AN INFORMANT OR SOMETHING.
TAP
TAP
UH...
WHAT WAS HIS NAME...?
DON'T BE SHOOTIN' UP WHILE WE'RE TALKING, ASSHOLE.
THW
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE SNITCH IN TOWN.
WHICH ONE WAS IT?
AK
MM...
AW SHIT, I DON'T REMEMBER!
ONE FIX AND I'LL REMEMBER! C'MON, REVY?!
HELL NO. I'M NOT FUCKING AROUND.
I'LL SEND OVER SOME SHIT FOR YOU THAT'S NOT BROWN ONE OF THESE DAYS, SO THINK HARD.
FOR PEACE IN THE UNIVERSE.
TOK TOK
...
...ROY...
...THAT'S IT...
RICHIE LEROY!
K CHK

BREN CAN ROUND UP ENOUGH MEN.
I'M BACK.
HEH HEH. YOU CLEAN UP GOOD.
IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
BREN'S PLAN IS TO FIGHT THE MAIN FORCE TOGETHER WITH YOU, BUT...
THE GUYS YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR ARE SCATTERED ACROSS SEVERAL MOTELS IN THE CITY.
BUT...

Black Lagoon Volume 7 - The End -

By
Rei
Hiroe
BLACK LAGOON
~Viva! Youth!~
THIS IS WHEN I WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH.
I DON'T LIKE THIS.
AGE 13
...THIS AGAIN?
SLAM
HEY, REVY...
YOUR EYES ARE SCARY!!
AGE 14
WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS?!
DO-DO-DO-DO-DO-DO-DO
I'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS ONCE BEFORE.
*SEE VOL.1
I SHOULD BE USED TO-
SH-SH-SH-SHUT UP!! IT'S THE SCHOOL RULES!!
SNEAK
YOU THINK THAT HAIRCUT'S COOL? DO YA?
SHUT UP, DICK-HEAD!!
STOP LOOKING !!
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANNA SEE YOU GUYS!!
AGE 12
BENNY?!
WHOA!! HE'S GOT THE BULLYING-VICTIM AURA GOIN' ON!!

WAM
VOOM
WELL HELLO...
...MY LITTLE DARLINGS.
BUT DUTCH HASN'T BEEN HERE.
AND SO...
HEY WHAT ABOUT DUTCH?!
WHERE'S DUTCH?!
DON'T BOTHER
FOR ME
HE FIGURED IT OUT AND RAN AWAY!!
AGE 29
IT'S ME, YOLANDA! CUTIE PIE.
YIKES!!
WHO ARE YOU?!
CAN'T YOU TELL?
AGE 17
SHIT! EDA!
SHE RUN OFF TOO?!
SERIOUSLY ?!
EDA'S GOT AN INTEREST-ING LOOK TOO.
BUT I DON'T SEE HER AROUND. OH, EDA?

AND SO...
UM...
MY DADDY AND MOMMY AREN'T HERE...
KYAA♡
SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. ♡
...
HEY, SIS.
AFTER SEEIN' YOLANDA NOTHING SURPRISES ME.
AGE 9
OH REALLY?
ANYWAY, YOUR EYES ARE SCARY-
SHUT UP!!
HO HO HO
YOUR UPBRING-ING SHOWS-
OH... YOU GUYS TOO?
MR. CHANG! YOU'RE SO YOUNG!!
BAO HASN'T CHANGED MUCH.
AGE 22
AGE 15
AGE 12
SHUT UP
SHENHUA LOOKS PRETTY HARD-UP.
IT NOT YOUR BUSINESS !!
COME TO THINK OF IT. I HAVEN'T SEEN THE SERGEANT ...
THP
THMP
CAPTAIN!

I've looked all over for you Captain!
...
...WHO ARE YOU?
How could you forget?!
AGE 16
WHAAAAAT?!!
It's me Boris!! Your Senior Sergeant!!
Before
After
...
I was teased for being scrawny!
So I joined the military to toughen up!!
But why?!
STAY LIKE THAT!!
WHAT A WASTE !!
SERGEANT ...!

AFTERWORD

HEY, IT'S HIROE.
THE ROBERTA ARC IS TURNING OUT TO BE LONGER THAN EXPECTED.
BUT IT'S THE TURNING POINT AND CONTAINS THINGS THAT BECOME INTEGRAL TO THE REST OF THE STORY, SO I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT. HAVING SAID THAT, THERE'LL BE LOTS AND LOTS OF SHOOTING COMING UP THAT I HELD BACK ON IN THIS VOLUME.

SHOUT OUTS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE.

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+
ALL THE FANS.

I'M SKIPPING MY FRIENDS THIS TIME.

I'LL SEE YOU IN VOLUME EIGHT.

-REI HIROE, SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

BUT...
IF A RESPONSIBILITY EXISTS THAT YOU MUST BEAR...
...THERE WILL BE NO ATONEMENT NO MATTER WHAT.
NOT REVENGE NOR PRAYER NOR FORGIVENESS ...
NOT EVEN DEATH.

The FARC

The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) was established as the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party in 1964. Since its formation, the FARC has waged a guerilla war against the Colombian government and perceived U.S. influence in the region. In addition to carrying out numerous terrorist attacks, the FARC has managed to gain control of large areas of rural Colombia. In the 1980s the FARC became involved in drug trafficking with the infamous Medellín cocaine cartels, warring with some and striking deals with others. The FARC also developed ties with the IRA. Currently the FARC is still active, and the guerilla war continues. Despite several attempts at peace talks, no lasting agreements with the Colombian government have been reached.

Like many of the characters in *Black Lagoon*, Roberta is running away from the horrors of her past life. Service as a maid in the Lovelace household was a cover at first but soon became a new life entirely, and one she desperately wanted to hold on to. The assassination of Garcia's father is not only the catalyst for events in the "Baile de la Muerte" story arc, it's also a turning point for Roberta. Her story may also pose a grim question to all the characters in *Black Lagoon*: when your soul is burdened with the darkest of sins, is there any chance of redemption?

U.S. SOCOM

The U.S. SOCOM (United States Special Operations Command) is a joint command that oversees the various special operations forces of the U.S. military. It includes units from the U.S. Army such as the 75th Ranger Battalion and U.S. Army Special Forces (the Green Berets), the U.S. Navy (SEALS), the Air Force (1st Special Operations Wing), and the U.S. Marine Corps. Some of the most highly trained unconventional warfare and anti-terrorism units in the world, such as the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment Delta (Delta Force) and the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, are under SOCOM command.

Major Caxton was involved in Operation Eagle Claw, the failed attempt to rescue American hostages held by Iran in 1980. The mission was to be conducted by the newly created Delta Force but turned into a disaster because of a helicopter crash at a desert staging area. Major Caxton's service in the Special Forces goes back to Vietnam, and memories of that conflict still haunt, and perhaps guide, his actions in the present.

IT'S EXACTLY LIKE IT WAS BACK THEN.
AND THEN I FINALLY REALIZED. THIS PLACE...
I WAS DREAMING ABOUT BEING BACK IN 'NAM. I WONDERED WHY I WOULD BE DREAMING OF THAT.
I HAD A BAD DREAM THIS MORNING, RAY.